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Prairie Pioneer

THE CHRISTIAN KREHBIEL STORY

Prairie Pioneer

BY CHRISTIAN KREHBIEL

Faith and Life Press, Newton, Kansas

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C. Henry Smith

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Foreword

ALTHOUGH NOT intended as a historical account, the autobiography of Christian Krehbiel conveys, as perhaps few other pioneer records do, the pulse and spirit of a historic drama—the coming of the Palatinate immigrants to the Middle West, beginning in the 1830s, and the great Mennonite migration from Russia in the 1870s. Significantly, Christian Krehbiel was not a bystander but a leading participant in this drama. It was during his lifetime that the foundations were laid not only for the General Conference Mennonite Church, but also for the economic, spiritual, and educational structure that was to develop among the Mennonites of the Middle West and prairie states. In this, too, Christian Krehbiel had an important part.

This autobiography is published for the Historical Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church as one in its Historical Series. The committee — members of which are Cornelius J. Dyck, Delbert L. Gratz, Cornelius Krahn, Gerhard Lohrenz, and Menno Schrag — wishes to acknowledge the excellent work done by Mrs. Elva Krehbiel Leisy, a granddaughter of Christian Krehbiel, in translating the autobiography from the original German. Appreciation is due also to the various Krehbiel relatives who have contributed financially to make this publication possible.

Newton, Kansas
July 1961

MENNO SCHRAG, CHAIRMAN
HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Preface

URGED BY his sons to write his autobiography, Christian Krehbiel on his seventy-fifth birthday in 1906, without the aid of glasses, settled himself to a task which in the end covered some three hundred handwritten pages. He relied solely on his memory.

After his death the family asked one of its members, Edward B. Krehbiel, a professor of history, to translate the manuscript, with future publication in mind. The press of business, however, prevented him from completing this task with the exception of the section dealing with migrations in the seventies (Chapter VI). This chapter he completed in order that it might be included in the book, *From the Steppes to the Prairies* (Newton: Mennonite Publication Office, 1949).

In 1949, when Edward Krehbiel felt that time would not permit him to finish the task, he sent the manuscript to his brother, L. P. Krehbiel of Halstead, Kansas, with the suggestion that I, daughter of H. P. Krehbiel, undertake the translation.

My work was greatly facilitated by the typed manuscript which Stella Richert had prepared from the original handwritten copy. When Cornelius Krahn proposed publishing the autobiography, I telescoped the wordy German phraseology into more concise English. One long chapter had been translated by Edward B. Krehbiel. Thanks to the editorial staff, the translation has not only been checked for historicity, but also made more readable.

The twenty-six Krehbiel cousins agreed to help the Historical Committee subsidize the printing of the book. It is with pleasure that we pay this tribute to a grandfather whose energy, will, and intellectual capacities we have greatly admired and have hoped to emulate at least in small measure.

ELVA KREHBIEL LEISY

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1

Good Days and Bad in South Germany

On October 18, 1832, I arrived as the third child of my parents Johannes Krehbiel III and Katherine Krehbiel in the grandparental home in the village of Weierhof, in the German Palatinate. The Weierhof had been the home of the Krehbiel family since 1671, when Mennonite persecutions in Switzerland during the seventeenth century caused them to flee that country. The duke of the Palatinate offered asylum on the Weierhof as a hereditary possession of the family of six, the parents and four sons. The refugees, despite their ownership of more than a thousand acres of land, were forced to do day labor to sustain themselves, since the land still was heavily forested.

The Weierhof lies at the foot of the Donnersberg hills rising to meet the mountain, with flat land stretching out toward Marnheim. It belonged to the community of Kirchheim-Bolanden in the Rheinpfalz. On the east it is bordered by the *Kaiserstrasse* (Imperial Highway) Napoleon built to connect Paris with Mainz. To the south lie Dreisen Standenbühl, and farther on, Kaiserslautern.

Close to the village in a half-moon valley near several springs arose the Hollerbrunnen which flowed off in a pleasant river bed and, joining the waters of the old brook, furnished the power for the mill wheel. Above this glen still stands a huge oak whose roots dig deep into the soil and whose wide-flung branches shade the valley.

This village in earlier years had but four families—all farmers —and one mill. By the time I came into this world this had

changed. The venerable buildings still stood, also the old church, and the cemetery with its beautiful linden trees guarding the entrance. Four substantial farmhouses had been added, as well as a weaving house, a large parsonage with workhouses around it, and a handsome new church on the hill, its terraced steps bordered by young linden trees. How beautiful it was! Now in 1906 as I write, a *Realschule* with about twenty professors and from 150 to 200 students has long been in operation. Whereas our ancestors worked for daily wages, the present owners employ day laborers.

Here at the foot of the terraced steps leading up to the church was my father's place of business and next to it the home in which I was born.

Recollections of My Childhood

On my chest I carry a scar, a reminder of God's mercy to me even in early childhood. My dear mother told me that as a small child I had a severe case of croup, the result of a thorough chilling out on the ice. Her cousin, Valentin Krehbiel, who was visiting with us at the time, prepared a Spanish mustard plaster to be laid on my chest. It saved my life. The heat engendered, however, burned the skin, leaving a scar which even now in my seventy-fifth year is very noticeable. I have also been told that when I was very young I nearly drowned in the brook at Ober-Florsheim. In these two rescues I recognize the protecting hand of God.

In my seventh year I was sent, together with the other children of the Weierhof, to the school in Bolanden. An old man named Reiss was my teacher, but I remember him only hazily. I remember more clearly that our parents arranged to have a school in the Weierhof. We met in the old church. Our teacher was so new and inexperienced that the school had to be disbanded. I must have learned very little, for when we children were sent after the closing of this school to the nearby town, I could not keep up with the studies and was sent back to the small village school. A year later I again attended the larger school, but for only one year since my parents left the Weierhof to move to Bavaria. I also attended, but for only a short time, the catechetical instruction class taught by Pastor Reder. The

memory of those meetings which brought me much blessing is still very vivid.

One lovely Sunday afternoon four of us boys were roaming in the fields. A sudden inspiration to extend the walk to Biedesheim was put into action. This was where my aunt Mary lived, whose stepchildren often visited us. Our aunt must have noticed that we were troubled about something, for she questioned us closely. From our honest answers she learned the story and soon sent us home. But our adventure had been noted and up and down the street we had to endure laughing references to our "heroic adventure." Fortunately, our parents did not punish us too severely since we had come home before dark.

One time I was threatened by sudden death. It was in Albisheim where I was visiting my uncle Jacob. On Sunday afternoon a number of young men congregated near Wohlgemuth's mill. Christian, the miller's brother, was accompanied by a large Newfoundland dog. This dog took a fancy to me, sniffing about me. Frightened by this affectionate interest I retreated toward a large pile of husks. Suddenly I sank into the water hole underneath, the husks completely covering me up. How the dandified young gentlemen finally pulled me out I do not know. But so lively has been my memory of the affair that my rescue has seemed as a special providence of God, for which I am grateful to this day.

My uncle Jacob, who had no sons as yet, was very good to me. Horses were my great pleasure. He had a handsome black pony which I was permitted to ride, though I was only nine. One day in the spring when the ground was a bottomless mud I was out riding. After several miles I decided to turn back. Everything went well until I rode down the steep bank toward the Pfrimm River. The horse sank so deep into the mud that I had to give him free rein. Taking advantage of this freedom, the horse stretched his neck and kicked his heels. The little rider, alas, found himself up to his ears in the mud. The horse, freed of its burden, ran home. A young ten-year-old friend, Christian Wohlgemuth, finding the runaway horse, hunted for me and found me coated with mud. He teased; nevertheless, he brought me safely back to my uncle's home.

I had another, more dangerous, horseback ride when I was

stable boy for my uncle Peter. I took a roan horse down to the brook one evening for a bath, as was the custom on the Weierhof. An older boy rode beside me on another horse. Suddenly on the way home his horse shied at something and ran away. Mastering my Fritz with a tight rein I held him until the runaway vanished around the corner of the barn. Fritz tossed his head and kicked his heels until he had thrown me off on the sharp cobblestones. From this episode I carry no scars.

Shortly afterward my uncle Jacob sent me with the wagon to a field where Jewish friends of his were harvesting potatoes. He had offered his wagon for carting the potatoes off the field. The workers had not yet finished digging up all the potatoes, striving to save as much of the crop before frost as possible. Darkness fell before we left the field. Selichmann, feeling sorry for the little nine-year-old, offered to do the driving. The youngster, feeling that his uncle had entrusted the wagon to him alone, indignantly refused, suggesting that his uncle had said Selichmann should work the brakes. He brought the horse, the wagon, and the Jewish family safely home. Since it was getting late, my uncle had sent one of the farmhands to meet me. But the old fellow did not reach for the reins in my hands; he would not have gotten them, anyway. But when we got home, he said, "Well, Christian, today you really were working with a lot of Jews."

Apparently my uncle had a great deal of confidence in my way with horses, for soon afterward he entrusted me with a huge load of stones for the parsonage at the Weierhof. The errand accomplished successfully, I began to pride myself on my driving ability.

Two visitors stand out clearly in my memory. One was the son of the Krehbiels from Pfrimmerhof who had been kidnaped as a child and returned for a ransom. The kidnaper was later executed.[1] The other visitor I also remember vividly. He was a young English millionaire who had been sent by his mother to study with our pastor Reder. Later, having married the minister's sister, he would gallop over on his gray horse from Kirchheim-Bolanden.

[1]See "Der Bubendieb" by Mrs. Emma K. Bachmann, *Mennonite Life,* July 1957, p. 131.

About this time a handsome young man, Peter Strohm of Bavaria, married my aunt Barbara and took her to the Schweig in the duchy of Dachau. My uncle Jacob soon followed him there with his family, settling on the Erlander-Hof. The urge to make a change came to my father. Together with Uncle Jacob Eymann and Uncle Michael Lehmann he planned to buy a large mill at Unterbrück near Munich.[2] When the deal was not consummated my father bought the Waspel farm at Kleinschwabhausen, Bavaria, to which he moved his family in the spring of 1844.[3]

I was only eleven years old, but I remember vividly how my father readied the heavy Palatinate wagon with wide wheels for the journey. For protection it was to have a thatched roof. He followed the instructions of an Albisheimer highway laborer who knew how the thatched roofs of Munich had been made. Father first built the framework of a roof on the wagon and nailed a few laths lengthwise. This was covered four inches deep with bundles of flail-threshed rye straw. Over this he drew a heavy rainproof cloth of hemp tow. Behold, a rain-proof, warm wagon-house! But it was almost too warm for comfort and too heavy for the horses to pull, especially after the beds and baggage and my mother and the children had been packed into it.

Then came the auction. The uncles who owned the mill had bought the house and all the land which did not lie within the village. The courtyard was filled with household goods and farm machinery. The auctioneer stood on the high stone steps of the house, and the notary sat in the window with his clerk. As each article was brought forward, the auctioneer, well aware of the dignity of his office, raised his voice, described the article, silently took the offers, and solemnly announced the bids. Then in a grave, yet loud, voice called out, "No one else?" Quietly then he began, "The first, the second," and "for the third time," then dropped his hammer, and the sale was completed except for registration with the notary. No bickering, no yelling and screaming as at an auction here. By evening all was sold—all

[2]The Eymann and Lehmann families later migrated to the United States, settling in Ashland County, Ohio.

[3]Kleinschwabhausen, our new home, belonged to the district of Einhofen in the duchy of Dachau. Our farm was called Waspelhof, named after the previous owner, and my father was known as the Waspelfarmer.

that our parents had gathered through fifteen years of hard work. All, except what was taken to Bavaria.

Now we were homeless. Before I leave the beloved home, around which gather the earliest memories of my childhood, I should like to describe it. It stood on a triangle between the main street of the village and another street which led to the mill. It had once been a corner of my grandparents' garden. The house was built across the point of the triangle, shorter by ten feet on one side than on the opposite. The foundation was very deep, allowing for two arched cellars, reached by two stairways. A small unarched room also was formed, serving as a fruit cellar, with a door and a small aperture in the wall. These could easily be walled up so no strange eye would suspect a room there—a necessary precaution in wartime for hiding valuables from marauding soldiers.

Above the cellar were four rooms, divided into two sections by a wide hallway which led to the front door. A stairway in the hall led to an unfinished room in the attic. Handsome stone steps led to the front door. The hall ended in the kitchen, with its cooking equipment, the chimney, and a basement stairway. The hall and the kitchen were floored with stone slabs. At the end of the house was the smokehouse, a necessity in every home in the village. Beyond was a malt-kiln and a vinegar distillery.

East of the house toward the grandparents was the courtyard, with its stables, coachhouse, and sheds along one side, and on the other a high wall along which was the manure pile. The yard was paved with cobblestones. Along the main street the yard was open with its lovely view of the new church with its terraced steps and its avenue of linden trees. The buildings were all of massive stone, built so firmly that unless fire, earthquake, or cannon disturb them, they will be standing centuries after my buildings in America have been destroyed by the ravages of time. But I must say farewell to my childhood home.

In Bavaria

In the caravan which began the trek were three wagons. These were lent to us together with four horses by the uncles from the mill and Uncle Peter Schowalter. Uncles Daniel and

Peter accompanied us as well as John Dauscher, servant and comrade of many years.

The caravan traveled through Mannheim, Heidelberg, up the Neckar Valley through Heilbronn, Stuttgart, Ulm, Augsburg, and Schweig as far as Kleinschwabhausen. Through Württemberg, because of the high mountains, extra spans of horses were often needed. One day, probably in the Geislinger Pass which took us half a day to cross, we could not at once secure the extra horses. My father decided to drive farther with the family, taking me along to bring back the horses from the stopping place. The host at the large and handsome inn where we stopped refused to take us in because with our covered wagon we looked like gypsies. My father was angered. Having traveled a great deal he knew the duties of a public innkeeper. He asked the huge Swabian whether his wasn't a public inn. On an affirmative answer, my father replied that he, his family, and the others who were following would stay there, or if refused admission he would turn to the police. That worked. The entire family was welcomed courteously.

I was sent back with the horses to meet the other wagons. Though I rode as fast as I could, darkness overtook me. Then I came to a fork in the road. Which way now? I will admit that tears filled my eyes. But a decision had to be made. The best idea was to return to the inn. A little way back I met a driver whom I had passed before. Thinking it queer that I should pass him twice, he called out, "Little boy, where do you want to go that you ride back?" I explained. "Well, just follow me." So I did that. We traveled so slowly that by the time we arrived, the people were harnessing the horses they had just procured. My trip had been in vain. If the good-natured Swabian had only told me to take the left fork I would have arrived in time to save the cost of two span of horses. But he didn't want to tell me where "Hauspeter's pear tree" stood. By midnight when we arrived at the inn with the two wagons, the innkeeper and "the gypsies" had become good friends. He gave us of his best and when we left wished us good luck.

Without further incidents we arrived at the new home with its good buildings. One hundred and seven acres of land with

forty acres of this in pine forest, one old house, half a dozen cows, and one old dog were included in the purchase.

Soon after our arrival in Bavaria I had my first mishap. I was told to drive from the Schweig, where we were staying with Uncle Peter Strohm, to the Eichstock in a small wagon drawn by the old brown horse and a Weierhof horse which was a habitual runaway. Two of Uncle Peter's small daughters and a nursemaid went along. Suddenly the one horse shied. I was on foot, leading this horse at the bridle because the wagon was so packed. I could not hold the horse, even though I hung on desperately in order to protect my precious cargo from disaster. Fortunately the kingpin broke, tearing the front wheels away from the wagon. But the rear of the wagon settled forward so gently that it merely frightened but did not hurt the passengers. At the Eichstock the horses were caught and returned, and the trip ended happily.

In the new home much was to be learned by the parents as well as by the children. Every region has its own customs. Woe be to him who from another area knows better, or wants to use his old methods! He pays a stiff apprenticeship fee. My father had been one of the best farmers on the Weierhof. Surely he could farm in Bavaria as he had in the Palatinate. He paid dearly for trying that. In the first place he had to learn the Bavarian dialect. I did not find that hard. The Bavarian, too, was different, deceitful, sly, cunning, particularly the laborer. He tolerated no deviation from custom. Nor did he permit any familiarity or friendliness with servants. They should recognize that they had a master, and they were always subject to inspection. It was difficult to adopt this attitude as it was difficult and costly to give up the Palatinate ways of farming. For example, the Bavarian customarily did his threshing before dawn, calling in additional help so that he had at least a group of six. In the Palatinate two men on the threshing floor worked until the shed was empty. My father could not introduce this method in Bavaria.

I now attended a Lutheran school in Lanzenried under a Johann Nestler. He insisted on much memory work, and on this basis he assigned grades as well as lashes. He stressed reading and writing, religious instruction, and the Lutheran cate-

chism. But his discipline was poor and his teaching methods mechanical. A retarded child never learned to think for himself. Still I learned much for my own good under this well-educated man.

The Mennonites had a church at Eichstock where the elder, David Ruth, and his brother Johann, the deacon, lived. This is the church my father joined.[4] At first David Ruth, who was the only minister, preached every Sunday. From him and from my father, later elected deacon, I received my simple, but clear and thorough, catechetical instruction. In my fifteenth year I received baptism, admittedly in great weakness; nevertheless, with childlike faith in the Saviour as my redeemer.

During this period I had a conflict Sunday afternoons between the Lutheran Sunday school and my instruction class. Our school teacher insisted that we must attend the Sunday school as well as the weekday school. My father decided otherwise. On Monday morning Nestler asked, "Krehbiel, where were you yesterday?" I answered politely, "Sir, I attended the catechetical instruction."

"But I told you you must come to Sunday school." Firmly I answered, "But my father told me I must go to instruction, and I must obey his orders." Consumed with anger, the teacher screamed, "I stand here in the name of the king, and not of David (Ruth). You will come to Sunday school next Sunday." Quietly I affirmed, "Not if my father says I must go to instruction." With that the die was cast. The guarantee of religious freedom which had been given the Mennonites when they settled in this duchy hung in the balance. The church council petitioned the king who agreed that Mennonite children need not attend the Lutheran Sunday school if their instruction class interfered, but that they must take the yearly examinations. Nestler must have been reprimanded

[4]Other members were Jacob Ruth from Harreszell; Heinrich and Peter Strohm and the Bergtholds from the Schweig; Hirschler and Hartmetz from Maisbrunn; Jacob Leisy and Samuel Berger from Fränking; Deutsch, Krämer, Seite, Hirschler, Lehmann, and Dahlem from Thann; and an uncle Jacob Krehbiel from Erlach, who was later elected minister. A Spies family from the Palatinate joined later. There was another Mennonite church in the community with a Zeissig as minister. They had broken away from the Eichstock church and met at Hammerhof where the Schmids and the Dettweilers lived.

for his intolerant attitude, for he was thereafter friendly, and no longer scoffed, "I am the teacher; David is only a farmer."

My schooling now came to an end. For a while I managed the farm, then became a driver and a laborer. In this latter function I traveled about a great deal, seeing Dachau, Munich, Augsburg, Nürnberg, and many market places and cities in that district. One winter I hauled manure through the deep snow on a sled spanned with four horses. Manure and marl were excellent fertilizer for Bavarian clover as well as for grain. Those were good times. The companions did not always have the highest standards; in fact, the social relations were quite different from those in the Palatinate. Still, one's mental horizons were broadened through these contacts.

Many visitors came to our house. Among them was Uncle Jacob Leisy, who had long lived in America, had visited many of the states and had made two trips across the ocean. The conversations centered in the countries and people he had seen and also on religious questions which were a burning issue in our community. I was often permitted to sit with and listen to the elders, for which I am still most thankful to my father. In this way, seemingly without effort, I gathered much information which broadened my horizon and turned my heart to nobler purposes than those prevalent among my youthful companions. I recommend this as a good pattern to all parents.

At this time I also observed the rudeness of some people in high position. For the malt needed in the distilling of brandy, a tax had to be paid to a tax collector, then a man from the nobility who had become a degraded ruffian. Father sent me on the last tax date to pay the tax. The rascal was not at home, returning at nightfall half drunk. Instead of accepting my payment and giving me a receipt as his office required, he began storming at me, saying, "The scoundrels want to cheat us, but it isn't me they cheat; it is the king." I had been there on time, although on the last day. He heaped further insults on my father, saying, "The farmers are always ready for such knavish trickery in their attempt to cheat the king." Uncle Leisy, the world-traveler, he addressed with disrespectful *du*[5] and when

[5]*Du* is the familiar form of address in German. *Sie* is used in polite conversation and among people who do not know each other well.

this one inquired, "Mr. tax collector, am I your *du*?" he contemptuously replied, "You apparently think that because you have been in America I must say *Sie* when speaking to you." After storming around like this for half an hour he finally took the money and gave me a receipt. Such an experience, however, did not incline a self-respecting young man to bow to proud aristocracy.

From America came letters from Uncle Eymann and others. These and the hours with Uncle Leisy gave us a vision of the opportunities and freedom of the new country. It kindled in us a deep desire for these fleshpots and for this equality in human rights. Soon a circumstance arose which caused us to break with the old order. My oldest brother Jacob was drafted into the army, and there were five more sons, all destined to become soldiers. Bavaria permitted substitution, but my father could not afford that for all of us. Moreover, he did not want his sons to be soldiers because of his convictions on nonresistance. He decided to sell everything and move to America. An opportunity presented itself to sell the farm, even though he had to accept several thousand gulden less than had been paid for it. A substitute for Jacob was found at 1,000 gulden for the six years of service. In the spring of 1851, after seven years in Bavaria, we were again homeless with less capital than we had brought to the new home. Again we were on the move. But this time many of our new acquaintances and intimate friends were also considering moving to a new home where they might find freedom of conscience and belief.

2

America After a Splendid Trip

THE FAMILY departure was long delayed by unexpected obstacles. The substitute could not immediately leave his work, so that my brother could not get his clearance papers without which the government would not give him a passport. Then Wolff, the former owner of the farm, accused Father of still owing him 100 gulden, even though Father had a receipt for every penny paid.

Because of this delay, Henry Ruth[1] and I were sent on ahead to the Palatinate for a visit. At Munich we crossed the railroad tracks at the wrong place. A railroad guard ran after us threateningly, but was appeased when we followed him obediently. By train and by coach we at last came to Ulm and then Württemberg. In Baden we had a pleasant welcome on a large and beautiful estate, the home of a man named Musselmann. We were alarmed shortly after our arrival by the visit of an official who we feared might consider it his duty to examine our passports. On telling our host of our problem I was reassured that the man was his personal friend, and he soon became our friendly entertainer. In Mannheim we again were alarmed. A Palatinate soldier on leave from duty in Munich, who was on the train with us from Heidelberg, took us to the bridge which crossed the Rhine. The sentry on guard asked to see the soldier's pass. Fearing that question, we stole quietly away, returned later and crossed safely without questioning into Lud-

[1]Henry Ruth, son of Jacob Ruth of Harreszell.

wigshafen. This town, named after Ludwig the Wise, was quite small, although larger and fairer than when we had seen it seven years before. Great holes outlined the old trenches along the Rhine. Before lovely homes and elegant streets could appear, these had to be filled up. On a rumbling wagon, and then on foot, we at last arrived in Friedelsheim at the home of my uncle Adam Schowalter, where we met his father, my grandfather.

On one of these pleasant days we accompanied Uncle Adam and several young Mennonites to the Dürckheimer Forest to get large logs for the sawmill. The logs, high up on the mountains, were rolled whizzing and thundering downhill to the valley where they were loaded onto wagons. Hard work, but fun, for these vine growers, whose delicious product made the work more pleasant.

I had visited Friedelsheim at Christmas when I was ten years old. The old minister Jakob Ellenberger had a Christmas celebration with his pupils. The schoolhouse was filled because this school had a superlatively trained Mennonite choir whose beautiful singing moved me deeply. While the pupils opened their packages, the lights were extinguished. In a brightly lighted niche appeared the nativity scene. Surprised, the children stared —and so did I. Too bad that with progress the simplicity of the Christmas story has been lost, particularly in the United States where a profane theatrical performance has replaced it!

The seventy-year-old Grandfather Schowalter took charge of us, marching with us to Biedesheim where we spent the night. There our cousin Christian Eymann showed us his new home. When he came to the parlor, he said, "This really sparkles," and then turning to me added, "Ask cousin Jacob whether they build such houses in America." At that time I was impressed. Now I would reverse the question. The next day we marched to the Weierhof. Even today I wonder how the old grandfather outwalked us boys.

Once again at the Weierhof, the dear old home. Greeting again the youthful comrades, the mothers and fathers and grandparents, and experiencing their warm affection, and again hearing the beautiful choir selections under the direction of my cousin Michael Löwenberg—this was indeed a great joy. Less

uplifting were the war songs sung by the friends of my youth in anticipation of the war of 1879. Still less so, the bowling in the inn at Bolanden where my brother Daniel[2] lost as many kreuzer as I won. But the Hollerbrunnen by the old oak tree gave me the same old thrill. Here I saved my cousin Barbara's life when she fell into the water.[3]

Still vivid in my memory is the delightful trip I took on the Donnersberg. I recall, too, the visit with the Strohms at Offstein. We young people went walking, the girls carrying parasols. But in the church we attended they donned small white caps, which they quickly hid when we left the church.

The Trip to America

In the meantime my father's difficulties had been partly resolved. Money was being used up rapidly, and, although Brother Jacob's passport was not yet ready, it was necessary to leave without it. He encountered no difficulty, and the passport probably still lies in some official's desk drawer, dusty and forgotten. The family gathered at the Weierhof. Too soon it was time to bid farewell. It was an emotional moment, for none of us expected to meet again on this earth. Many dear friends accompanied our party of twenty-five to Worms. Here, gifts were exchanged. I still have a snuffbox which a tender hand gave me, but I know not whose. The stay in Worms was short. The steamer came; tearful farewells were said; then we boarded the boat. As we slowly steamed down the Rhine, we saw the pier white with waving handkerchiefs. And then we turned our faces to the unknown West.[4]

Presently we passed by Mainz, Coblenz, and then Cologne where the towers of the beautiful Dom were still unfinished. And then Rotterdam in Holland. There we were crowded like so many herring into a dark emigrant house where a butcher

[2]Daniel had come to the Weierhof a few weeks earlier with Heinrich Krämer.

[3]The Hollerbrunnen was a spring well or a running spring which furnished their water supply.

[4]At Fränking we were joined by John Berger, oldest son of Samuel Berger and his daughter Katharina. Uncle John Löwenberg and family had joined us at the Weierhof. A young girl, a Bergthold of Siebersfeld, and a young man named Bäcker of Bannhausen joined them.

from Württemberg maintained they served us horsemeat. All the food, according to our taste, had a strong sea-water flavor because Rotterdam lies on the North Sea and all its streets contain sea water canals which carry sea-going ships. "The food stinks," we protested, but our landlord assured us that the Dutch were very cleanly. Even the drinking water was unpleasant. My brother Jacob finally rented a boat, rowed into the middle of the Rhine, and there filled a barrel with water. Compared to our spring water, the Rhine water had seemed most brackish; but now, how delicious it seemed!

We were crowded into a steamer bound for LeHavre, France. But we had barely reached the open water of the North Sea, when all of us had our first experience of seasickness. Everyone had assured me that I would not be seasick. This was true only as long as I stayed on deck. My father, however, sent me into the so-called cabin, more truly a foul pit, to look after my mother. Here all were sick. Suddenly, as though struck by lightning, I joined the choir of misery. Then came a round I shall never forget—vomiting, numbing of the nervous system, headache, chills despite my leaning against the warm chimney, complete dejection so that I was ready to die of homesickness and misery. "If only we had stayed in that lovely Germany," I moaned, "then we wouldn't have to lie here like dogs." But the cup of coffee the steward brought me revived my spirits, and I could step off the boat at LeHavre with renewed courage.

The emigrants with all their baggage disembarked. French stevedores hurled the bags on huge trucks, many pieces dropping down on the pavement, bursting open and scattering their contents in all directions. An obliging Frenchman tore a basket from one of the emigrants and was about to pitch it on the piled luggage. My mother, seeing this, screamed, "My child! my child!" My youngest brother Peter, only a few months old, lay in that basket. The man, hearing her terror, stopped, looked into the basket, and hastily returned it. This was eloquent testimony of what mother love so displayed even in a strange land and in a strange tongue can accomplish.

The basket again played an interesting role. Tobacco was much cheaper and of a much finer quality in Rotterdam. Many of the smokers laid in a goodly supply for the voyage. While

my mother was cleaning the basket—we were lodged in the Emigrant House in Rotterdam—she discovered a bundle of fine Dutch tobacco. Somebody wanting to smuggle tobacco over the border probably dropped it into the basket when he saw the customs inspector making his rounds, intending to claim it when we got to France. Since by reporting the incident we might have had considerable embarrassment, we kept quiet, and our smokers contentedly smoked the fine tobacco as we crossed the ocean. But that basket with its precious load was guarded more carefully. Several days in the clear air of Le-Havre with the enjoyment of spring water, good red wine, and excellent food not only revived our bodies, but our courage as well. Finally the day came when we were to embark on the *Splendid,* a small sailing vessel carrying about 350 passengers. They marched us up the gangplank single file like geese. The French police perfunctorily examined the passports. Father and Uncle presented theirs; the officials made a superficial count and then called out, "Good, *avancéz!*" Forward we marched, including the brother without a passport. Without a passport was also the young Württemberg butcher mentioned before who on the high seas confided, "Today I should be in Stuttgart joining the dragoons." How many more passportless deserters were smuggled through with our group I do not know.

"All aboard! Sails up!" This sudden stentorian command we landlubbers hardly understood, but it electrified the crew which answered with a brisk and jubilant "Heave ho!" The anchor was raised, and majestically our fast sailing boat slid down with the tide, seeking to join the high seas. But alas, it also separated us anxious emigrants from Europe's lovely shores without, however, estranging us from the dear ones left behind.

As steerage passengers we were placed on the one steerage deck this ship had. By mistake an Austrian in regimentals was also assigned to this deck. Long and bitterly he complained, "I'm a soldier, and I'm not going to stand for this," until at last he was given a cabin. Our doubledecker bunks were pretty far back in the ship. When the weather was nice we had plenty of fresh air from the opened portholes. The promenade deck was one stairway up. Here, too, were the sailors' quarters, the kitchen, and an officers' cabin. Moving around here the steerage

passengers could observe the wonders of the ocean. Aft were the cabins, and above them the captain's bridge, the helm, and the promenade for cabin passengers.

Of our group only a few were seasick, but those who had come overland to LeHavre began to suffer. Many of the people also suffered from an inflammation of the eye, myself among them. An English doctor cut the tiny veins in the eyeball, and recovery followed quickly.

Large fish, particularly dolphin, played about the ship. The sailors harpooned one of them. Another day a whale surfaced near us, spouting water first, then showing its long back, finally its tail, and then the monster disappeared.

On Sundays, according to English custom, the sails were hung slack and the ship floated almost motionless on the sea. Several days of the journey the sea was very turbulent, the ship plunging up and down, ready to bury its nose in the next great wave. At the same time it sloped sideways so that from the kitchen door we looked directly across the ten-foot railing into the waters. But only once did we have a really severe storm. It came up in the night, breaking a crossbeam on the rigging. All the portholes were closed, and even the doors to the gangways were locked. In the hold of the ship the trunks bounced back and forth like so many toys.

Steerage passengers had to do their own cooking. Since the kitchen was very small, there often was friction even in our own group. One day an arrogant Württemberger took our cooking vessel off the stove. Bavarian muscles flexed quickly and soon taught the young man a lesson he did not forget.

Our second helmsman was a mulatto with a thick skull. He enjoyed bumping into the passengers with his head. One day he butted a strong young man seated on the stairs. The latter coolly took off his wooden shoe with iron nails and returned the blows with interest, whereupon the hornless "goat" scampered out of the way. One day a learned German scholar on the upper deck gave a lecture to which some of the steerage passengers were invited. He ridiculed the Bible story of creation. A young farmer finally asked the learned man if he could tell us whence we actually came. "That" he replied, "is the great problem on which we are now working."

"Well, if you cannot explain our origin," said the young farmer, "I will thank you for your explanation, but I will hold fast to the Bible story, for it tells us whence we came." Crushed by the laughter, the learned doctor left the company.

The New World

Thirty-five days after leaving LeHavre, our ship, the *Splendid,* arrived in New York harbor with all passengers well and safe. The passengers had to remain on board until morning. Only my brother Jacob left the ship. Johannes Unsicker, who on a previous crossing and on the same ship had crossed in seventeen days, came on board to greet us, and Jacob went home with him. The next day Jacob reported how Mrs. Unsicker had received him very courteously, but a bug had annoyed him no end while in bed. "Those" said Unsicker, "are bedbugs; they are all over America." What a reception for a greenhorn from Europe—this bloodsucker!

Arrangements for lodging had been made, on the recommendation of friends, with the Swiss Hall in New York City. Here we stayed for several days while we made arrangements for our further journey. Tickets had to be bought. It would cost $7.00 to travel to Cleveland, Ohio, but the ticket agent insisted on $8.00. When he learned that our interpreter was not expecting a rake-off he gladly asked the $7.00.

From New York City we went up the Hudson River to Troy or Albany on a steamer, and then by train along the Erie Canal to Buffalo. Here we lodged in the immigrant house belonging to Swiss Hall. Our parents went over to Northbush to visit the Pfrimmerhof Krehbiels. We had been told that we could catch a boat for Cleveland the day after our arrival in Buffalo. But when our parents returned from their visit they were told, "You can't leave here until Monday." It was now Thursday. Inquiries at the office brought the same answer. Twenty-five persons at seventy-five cents to a dollar per day would have been a fat goose for the innkeeper on which he could have feasted. That it would have cost us $100 did not matter. But Uncle John Krehbiel, who could speak English, argued with the agent that he knew a steamer traveled every day to Cleveland. We

boarded the ship as scheduled. Again the poor immigrant was taken advantage of!

In Cleveland we were met by Uncle Daniel[5] who had left Germany some eighteen years before. The parents stayed with him. The rest of the family was lodged in a German hotel. Our boxes were left in the yard, and I had to be guard for the night watch. A box of pepper could hardly have purified my blood of its German quality more thoroughly than did the millions of mosquitoes that feasted on me that night. My body and face were covered with little red blotches. Now I was Americanized and purified for use in this country.

After a day in Cleveland we took the train for New London,[6] then drove through twenty miles of primeval forest and on to Hayesville near Ashland. This was our home until the spring of 1852.[7] We had left the Weierhof near the end of May and arrived here the end of July, just in time for the end of harvest. I was put behind the threshing machine, equipped with a blower, where in the 100-degree heat I stacked the straw. It was enough work for two men; far too much for me. I nearly died of sunstroke. But the experience helped to make me a self-reliant American.

After harvest I hired out to a certain Christian Vesper for $8.00 a month. I constructed a wall of lime mixed with straw. Then I spread manure and mowed the clover patch for seed with a four-foot cradle. Having mastered this art in Germany, I could do more than my "boss" expected of me. Thus a certain glory accrued to the "greenhorn Dutchman." But not for long. My "boss" sent me out to chop kafir corn. When I told him at noon how much corn I had chopped, his face fell. After dinner I asked him how to do this work; and, when he had shown me, I could soon cut as much as the Americans.

The people, mostly Pennsylvania Germans, husked their corn at corn-husking bees. I was enrolled in one of these "clubs" in

[5]Daniel Krehbiel. Anna Leisy (Mrs. Gerhard Wiebe) was there also.
[6]At New London we were met by Uncle Peter Schowalter, Christian Eymann, and Cousin Jacob Lehmann.
[7]My parents had one room in the home of Jacob Risser, the "iron" Risser of Friedelsheim.

place of my employer. I not only had to learn how to husk corn, but I had to prove that an upright German is no fool.[8]

From Ohio to Iowa

Iowa was really our goal for establishing a new home, since land in Ohio was very expensive and still covered with forests. On the suggestion of friends in Ohio that it would be better to move in the spring so that crops could be put out to sustain people during the winter, our parents, Uncle Peter Schowalter, and Valentin Schwann decided to move in the spring of 1852.[9] All agreed, though, that it would be advisable to send some young people in the fall, since there was opportunity to make a living. Four families had already moved there in the spring of 1851. I decided on the spur of the moment to accompany Henry Krehbiel of the Weierhof. In fact, at that time I would have undertaken a trip around the world if parental permission and money had been available. Just imagine a young man who loved people and social fellowship groups, who had been bottled up in the bowels of a ship for thirty-five days, being suddenly plopped down on an American farm to work alone day after day, and then you will understand this intense yearning for adventure.

In mid-September Henry Krehbiel, 25, and I, only 19, bade farewell to our loved ones and started off on our first independent journey. By carriage to Mansfield and then by train through a swampy section we jolted on our way to Columbus. We would gladly have bought second-class tickets at Columbus where we had to change trains, but my English-speaking friends would not make inquiry. Determined to make use of what little English I knew, I rushed up to various people, inquiring, "Where is the 'twotes' class?" Finally one of my friends said, "Don't say 'twotes' class; two means *zwei, zweites* is called second." But

[8]Here in Ohio was a German church, half Mennonite and half Lutheran, with Pastor Konradie as minister. Christian Schowalter of Asselheim, Palatinate, taught the school. He was later the minister of the Zion Church, Lee County, Iowa, then teacher at the Wadsworth school, and for years secretary of the General Conference.

[9]Several families had already moved to Iowa: Jacob Krehbiel of the Weierhof Mill; Jacob Galle of Uffhofen; Weber of the Donnersberg; an uncle Eymann; and Christian Ellenberger, pastor.

neither second nor "twotes" class existed, and we paid a nobleman's ransom.

At the depot in Cincinnati we were accosted by one of the "German swindlers." "Are you German and are you looking for a hotel?" he asked in seeming sincerity and in good German. We mistrusted his suavity, but still he was German, and so we allowed him to take us to what he said was a good hotel. He stopped at a tavern and took us to our bedroom. When he opened the door we were floored by a horrible stench of mingled beer and bedbugs. The bed was as black as a shoe. But it was too late to go elsewhere. So we got into the dirty bed and let the bedbugs suck our blood. In the morning we passed through a room where a well-dressed drunken sot lay in the chimney corner, trying to raise his personality out of the mire. That disgusted me. In the afternoon our "Fritz" of the night before sidled up to us again, whispering that he was now working for another and better hotel. When asked, "Yesterday you told us this hotel was good; now it is bad," he answered, "Whose bread I eat, his song I sing."

We had already bought tickets to St. Louis on an Ohio-Mississippi stern-wheeler boat. The trip in the cabin with board and room cost each of us $8.00. The boat was to leave in a few hours, the agent said. But even though black smoke was pouring from the chimney, the few hours dragged out into three days and nights. With gentlemen's board and good beds, we did not mind the delay which gave us a chance to see the town.

The first night of the journey we were so tired that we fell asleep in our deck chairs. The steward tapped me on the shoulder. Startled awake, I looked at the next chair, but my friend Henry was not there. Trying my little English I asked, "Where is de one man?" The two men laughed uproariously and then reiterated, "You go to sleep, you go to sleep." Thoughts of his having been kidnaped flashed through my mind. Finally one of the men took pity on me. "He's in bed," he said. Off I went. The next day I reproached him for embarrassing me. "I wanted to wake you, but the steward said to me, 'I fix him,' " he told me. "And you agreed to that?" I demanded, adding, "Young though I am, I would not have done that to you." Later it turned out that the "fixer" was another German.

In Cincinnati we looked up many of our old friends living there. Finally there came the order to leave. The boat moved downstream slowly because the river was very low. At Louisville, Kentucky, we had our first glimpse of a slave state, and we saw for ourselves that slavery does not promote the growth of a city. South of Louisville we had to pass through a canal with three locks, and this took time. Watching the slowly passing scenery, we caught a glimpse of a giant who operated a tavern on the cliff and whose huge stature attracted the attention of many visitors. Once out of the canal the boat moved faster through the three-foot deep channel even though we were frequently impeded by sand bars. Once we were delayed for half a day while the boat was trying to free itself from a sand bar by placing long, foot-thick tree trunks alongside the boat in the water. The huge paddle churned the water behind the boat, stirring up the sand. When the boat rose above the tree trunks, it floated again. But the boat almost collapsed under the violent vibrations.

Along the Mississippi

We came next to the junction of the Ohio with the Mississippi River at Cairo, Illinois. This town lies in the lowlands and suffers from floods. The region is very fertile, but is also unhealthy, with much ague prevalent. Of the fast trip from Cairo to St. Louis up the wide and deep Mississippi I remember little. Here we were met by John Eymann, a harnessmaker who had come down from Iowa for his annual purchases. He had spent his time waiting for our eight-day voyage to end and seeing St. Louis meanwhile. He was, therefore, an excellent guide. Although at that time St. Louis was already the most important center of commerce in the West and had many imposing residences, it was still dirty and grimy. I saw a prairie schooner, drawn by eight pair of oxen, struggling axle-deep in the mud of one of the best streets. During our two-day stay we saw the sights and did some shopping. Again we bought boat tickets, registered for cabins, and boarded the Mississippi steamboat.

This time we were not aboard a stern-wheeler, but in a large two-wheeler with enormous boilers stoked by Negroes. It was between 150 and 200 feet long. The keel was narrow and

shallow. The deck was much wider and had space in the middle for the engines and for the boilers above which rose two huge chimneys. The gangplank was in front, the places for the crew at the rear, and behind this the rudder. The rest of the deck was devoted to freight, and passengers could congregate here when they found room. The cabins were on the upper deck, with the dining room down the center, a room which could be used as a lounge as well. At the front was the clerk's office and the barroom, and at the rear the ladies' lounge with a piano, and the captain's room. The cabins had two exits, one to the lounge, the other to the railed in and encircling promenade deck. Another deck above this one had the kitchen and various other rooms, plus the captain's bridge. The rest of the space was reserved for passengers' use. A wide stairway led to the cabins below. Another deck above, reached by a narrow stairway, was centered by the navigation house where the huge steering wheel was guided. Passengers could also walk on this deck. Such a steamboat was a five-story colossus, whose first story under water served as ballast, the second as cargo depot and cattle stall, while the cabin deck was a floating hotel serving the finest delicacies to its cabin passengers. On the Rhine, both cargo and passengers are carried in the hold below water level.

Such boat trips, although pleasant, were not without danger. Log rafts in the channel imperiled particularly the upward journey. Logs, floating down from the northern woods, often jammed into sand banks and in the process became submerged under the water. A boat traveling at top speed might well bump into an invisible log and spring a leak. Another danger centered in the urge to race. The engines, overheated with tar or lard and straining beyond their capacity, would burst the boilers, and the entire boat would sink. We were treated to minor examples of these dangers, which fortunately caused no mishap.

At the end of a full day's trip we came to Keokuk, Iowa. Eagerly we stepped out on the soil of the state that was to be our home. In 1852 Keokuk, a name derived from an Indian chieftain, was a very small town, but an important trading post. It is in the southeast corner of Lee County and of Iowa. Actually we were bound for Franklin Center, thirty miles northwest.

There were neither railroads nor stagecoaches operating in Iowa at this time, and there was no other regular transportation to Franklin. So we started off on foot, baggage and all. The road was covered with two-inch planks which made walking easier. But our bags grew very heavy. Joyfully we heard the clop-clop of horses behind us on those wooden planks. The driver offered us a ride at fifty cents apiece to within four miles of the Eymann home. Happily we threw our bags into his rickety wagon and crawled up beside him. Though only at a slow pace, we soon covered the next few miles. And then the plank road ended, only seven miles out of Keokuk. We were on a dirt road with very deep ruts. The poor lean horses had to rest frequently. Finally we decided to walk, glad that we need not carry our bags. But the horses could not keep up with us. When we came to a woods, the driver announced, "Here I stay for the night." Not wanting to do that, we paid him and proceeded on foot. Anyone who knows Iowa mud knows what lay ahead of us. Twenty more miles to go, and the sun was sinking! Our guide, John Eymann, had never come this way. Uncertain whether we were on the right track, he decided to ask at the next house. Since the house was near the road and the farmer stood on his porch, we could hear the whole conversation. Poor Eymann, confused by his uncertainty and our snickers, lost the little English he knew and stuttered, "Can you teel uns wher Eymann lieves?" Rudely the farmer answered, "Gelt, you are a Deutscher? That "Heumann" lives just a mile and a half from here." What a relief to find we were so close! But our guide's readiness with the English language took a fearful beating and often he was gently reminded, "Gelt, you are a Deutscher?" Only a short brisk walk, and we heard Uncle Eymann's dog barking. Soon we were in the two-room house, receiving a royal welcome and eating a hearty meal. What a relief!

3

Manhood, Marriage, and the Ministry

My first experience in Iowa was as a farmhand for Uncle Eymann. Henry Krehbiel went to Uncle "Miller" Krehbiel. My work consisted in taking care of the horses and cattle and of felling trees and splitting fence rails. Uncle had told me where to cut down trees in the woods. For several days I worked lustily and chopped down a nice pile of trees. Then one morning a man rode into my solitude, saying in English, "You are cutting down in my woods." So much I understood and could also tell him that Eymann had told me to work here. He led me from pile to pile, asking each time, "You cut this?" It turned out I had worked almost entirely in his woods. Still the man was not angry, only said, "Tell Eymann to settle with me," and then showed me where the boundary lay. Uncle paid him the reasonable sum he asked for the trees. The man was John Stuart. Such considerateness is a pleasing American trait from which we Germans can take a lesson.

The Mennonite Settlement

The Mennonite families already here, not yet organized into a church, met for worship in the schoolhouse, a blockhouse. Henry Ellenberger was the preacher. The Lutherans[1] had a church building, but held meetings only every other Sunday. When my parents and other families arrived, the Zion Mennonite Church, Donnellson, was established and I became a mem-

[1]The Lutheran (really Evangelical) minister was Pastor M. Kraulein.

ber. The congregation had outgrown the capacity of the school, but could not afford to build a church. But it could meet on alternate Sundays in the Lutheran church and attend their services on the other Sundays.

At this time the settlement had the addition of sixty people from the Palatinate.[2] They had had a long voyage of fifty-eight days. Taking the northern route via Detroit and Chicago because cholera was raging over the country, they had made a tedious journey by canal boat, with long detours. Poor Grandfather Strohm was so exhausted that he arrived at West Point mortally sick. Despite careful nursing he died, 72 years of age.

I, too, could help with the nursing of the grandfather since I was in West Point at that time. Although I had not yet recovered from a severe bout with the ague, I had come as a nurse for my cousin Christian Krehbiel who was sick with a nervous disease.[3] Since I wore white linen suits, I looked like a ghost. When Uncle John Ruth, who had last seen me in Germany as a strapping, rosy-cheeked youth, met me, he did not recognize me. When I told him who I was, he cried out, "Ach, Christian, alas, if this is America!" My explanation calmed him. One day my patient asked the doctor, "Can't you give me anything but this filthy water and medicine?" "Alas, no!" said Dr. Wahrer, "In Germany I could give you dry plums, raspberry juice, and other prescriptions, but here in the West we must do with what we have." Primitive conditions prevailed in Iowa at that time.

One day a quack doctor by the name of Beck came into the sickroom uninvited and wanted to bleed the patient. "Who are you?" asked the sick man. "I be a doctor" he said. "Then I should like to see the pharmacist," said Christian opening his fever-stricken eyes wide. This Beck, once a soldier, a policeman, perhaps the village barber, now pawned himself off as a doctor, but he was nothing but a drunken sot.

Once before when my little brother Peter, neglected by his nursemaid, broke his collar bone, I was sent to get the nearest

[2]Among these 60 newcomers were Uncle Jacob Leisy, Uncle Jacob Krehbiel, Grandfather Johann Strohm, David Ruth, John Ruth, and their families.

[3]*Kaltes Fieber* or *Nerven Fieber.*

doctor, this Beck. I found him in the beer parlor, drunk. Hoisting him up on the other horse I had brought along, and holding him up as we traveled along, I soon regretted having come for him. I reproached him for calling himself a doctor yet swilling like a beast. "Unless I drink, I can't make any judgments. I have no ideas . . ." he excused himself. He fell asleep setting the bone, lolling and reeling until I chased him to bed. He bandaged the arm so poorly it was crippled for life.

Exhausted from nursing my cousin, I nearly succumbed to the same fever. The doctor sent me home with some of the medicine he had used. Our home at that time was a block-house, no ceiling, but a roof over the one room. Here I lay in the center of all activity. My mother finally gave me a little water to drink in answer to my pleadings. Setting the water pitcher near my bed, she again left the room. Eagerly I drank to my heart's content. A great purge followed, and I felt greatly relieved and almost well. Just then the little Eymann boys ran in, shouting, "Christian, a big snake! Come shoot it!" Snatching up my gun I rushed out of the house to kill the snake —but it had disappeared. As luck would have it, the doctor just then drove up. "Here I've ridden eleven miles, only to find the patient up and hunting," he growled. When I told him of my cure, he growled again, "Nature took care of you, but you might have been mighty sick." He gave me some more medicine and remained my good friend. But since that time I have had great faith in the curative powers of water for a fever.

Establishing a Home

The Zion Mennonite Church was founded at this time, under the good leadership of Uncle Henry Ellenberger, David Ruth, Jacob Krehbiel, Jacob Schnebele, and my dear father, as preachers. A nice church was built with a schoolroom at one end of the basement. Brother Christian Schowalter, who had moved from Ohio, was the capable teacher. The young people formed a singing society, led first by my traveling companion, H. Krehbiel, then by a man named Schauerman, who, however, put off teaching notes from lesson to lesson because he himself had not learned them. Finally my brother was made the leader.

My father had bought some one hundred acres of land, sev-

enty acres still in virgin forest, without a building on it. Though the place cost only $800, my father went into debt to buy the many necessities. The loss in Bavaria, the expensive trip, and the cost of a large family had seriously depleted my father's resources. House and barn were built of logs from the trees we chopped and dressed in our forest. The neighbors helped block the house. The gaps between the logs were filled with short sticks of wood, smeared with clay. Two windows and the door were set in, a floor laid, and the one-and-a-half-story house with its walled basement was ready. The barn was finished, also, and Father had had a good well dug.

But until this house was finished we had lived with the American Walkers from whom father and Uncle Löwenberg had bought the farm. The latter lived in the house with the previous owners. Our family slept in a small room under the clapboard roof through which the snow sifted. My brother and I slept in a small room reached by a ladder. It was only five feet high, and airy as well. As the nights grew colder we laid a wagon robe brought from Germany over the bed. One night it snowed heavily, the strong wintry wind blowing the snow through the cracks into our faces. We pulled the robe well over us and slept comfortably. But we awoke to see snow a foot deep on our cover. To crawl out without scattering snow all over the room and into the bed was a trick. For weal or woe we again crawled back carefully under the covers in the evening, leaving the snow undisturbed until the weather cleared and the bedding could dry out. How we yearned for Germany and its pleasant, warm bedrooms! In addition, like most of the newly arrived Germans, we suffered from a skin disease which Dr. Wahrer said must be treated like cancer, though it was not.

In the spring the Walkers joined a caravan of ox-wagons going to Oregon, a trip fraught with much danger because of the Indians. Löwenbergs moved into their house, and soon after we moved into our newly finished blockhouse, and into what seemed to us younger ones good living. Our parents had made a great sacrifice for us in leaving their comfortable possessions in Germany, and we children can never be grateful enough. Nor can the descendants of the other Iowa immigrants.

Because there were only thirty acres of farmland on our farm,

we had to rent more land and some of us boys had to earn money to support the family. At first it was my lot to stay at home to clear the forest and do the everyday farm work. In Ohio I had become proficient at cutting clover with the American cradle. Now I had to learn to mow grass with a crooked scythe and to cut grain with a cradle. After my brothers grew old enough to work in the fields, I mowed and cut grain for the neighbors at one dollar a day. I became so skilled that one summer I mowed and cradled 80 acres of grain, and the next summer 100 acres. To do this I cut from 3 to 5 acres a day, which two men then raked and bound. Although I enjoyed the hard work, I am very glad that machines have taken the place of the scythe and the cradle.

Many people also raised and fed many hogs which were either slaughtered at home or driven in great droves to Keokuk. Often droves of a thousand or more came out of the west past our house. The Franklin prairie farmers preferred to butcher their own hogs and to take the meat to the market. Since my uncle in Germany had taught me the trade, I was much in demand as a master butcher. Sometimes the weather was very cold, but even a hard freeze could not stop the work even if it had to be carried on outdoors. By the time the carcasses were cleaned, we felt as cold as an iceberg. Then we worked in a cramped room until midnight, making sausages. The next day we repeated the same round on another farm. We butchered fifteen, twenty, or thirty hogs in one day, kept the meat we needed, froze the rest, and hauled the meat to Fort Madison or Keokuk. It was hard work, but we were healthy. It was much pleasanter, though, to plow, to break in a colt for riding, to truck great logs, or even to break prairie with teams of six to ten oxen. But the former brought in money.

Marriage

March 1858 saw a change in my life. Susanna Amalia, daughter of our elder, David Ruth,[4] returned my affections, and, having parental consent, we were married on March 14. My uncle Jacob performed the ceremony in the Zion Menno-

[4]Susanna's mother was a daughter of Johann Strohm of the Schweig, Bavaria.

nite Church according to Christian custom and with full parental blessing, and today I can add, graciously sanctified by the Heavenly Father. Not only did He give us fifteen children of whom nine sons and three daughters are still living and in good health, but He also blessed us richly with earthly possessions, leading us gently by His hand, so that we never suffered although we possessed nothing when we were married. I must say as Jacob of old, "for with only my staff I passed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies" (Genesis 32:10).

Of course, there were trials. This I was soon to experience. We were living with my wife's parents where I worked for our board and room for a year. She was 18 and I was 25. We were happy in this arrangement. Then suddenly one day my eyes became inflamed and for four weeks I could bear no light. Fighting the pain, I walked up and down the dark hallway day after day for four weeks. Harder to endure was the melancholy fear that I would lose my eyesight and bring misfortune to my dear young companion. In great anguish of soul I resigned myself to the will of God, resolved that were I to be blind I would be guided by Him. Mercifully the despair subsided, my spirits rose, and I could sing in the dark, *"Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan, Es bleibt gerecht sein Wille.*[5] The pain left, although I could not yet see more than a hundred feet and so had to perform much of my work in this dimness of vision. The patience and understanding of my young wife, her mother, and the rest of the household were a bulwark of strength to me. This experience was truly the highest type of schooling I could get. Out of this darkness was born a light which has illumined all of my life and soul. By the end of the year my eyesight was again normal, although I have occasionally had trouble with it. Still, I am writing this without glasses and can still read without glasses. That is God's grace.

Summerfield, Illinois

In the second year of our marriage my father-in-law rented his farm to me and to his oldest son. He also suggested that I journey to St. Clair County, Illinois, to visit Uncle Jacob Leisy. He had migrated immediately to Summerfield and had done

[5]"Whate'er my God ordains is right; His holy will abideth."

well, better than we Iowans had. On the way I visited with the John Leisy and Daniel Baer families in their brewery. At the time the Mississippi was flooded out of its banks, the water rising to the doors of the house. They could not even drive to town. Brother Leisy took me across the raging waters of the "father of waters" in a small boat, my only boat ride like this over a wide stretch of water. On my previous trip I had been a cabin passenger on a steamboat; now I went the American way. In St. Louis we crossed the Mississippi on a ferry to Illinoistown, now called East St. Louis. There I boarded the Ohio-Mississippi train for Summerfield.

Here I stayed, naturally with Uncle and Aunt Leisy, for she was the sister of my dear mother-in-law. Uncle Leisy owned a 160-acre farm on which he had built a two-story brick house, a large barn, and granaries. In Iowa people were still living in huts. Here in the rich loam, excellent wheat and enormous crops of corn could be raised, as well as fruits and vegetables which commanded a good price in St. Louis, then the chief market for the West. In Iowa, only summer wheat and a lighter corn would grow. Very little fruit was raised and for this the market also was very poor. In more recent times Iowa conditions have become more favorable.

Uncle Leisy had offered my father-in-law eighty acres of land, I think at $40 an acre; land in Iowa was selling for $10 to $15 an acre. I had been sent to look over the land. After I had visited with several Mennonites in the neighborhood and with the Baers and Brands who lived twelve miles nearer St. Louis, it seemed to me best that we buy on the conditions laid down by Uncle Leisy. Uncle now reminded me that under the conditions the seller's wife was to receive a silk dress. Since I was still a bit uncertain I said bluntly that the silk dress would have to wait. Because my father-in-law's plan was to turn the land over to me and David Lehman, with the provision that we pay the interest, the taxes, and the principal in installments, I felt I had the right to refuse to buy the dress. Actually I wanted a hint as to whether it was God's will that we move. To be brief, we moved to Illinois in March 1860, together with David Lehmans. And we did not buy the silk dress. My brother Jacob, my dear mother, and several of the younger brothers

and sisters moved with us. Our dear father had passed away in December 1859.

Our welcome to Summerfield was very cordial, particularly on the part of the Mennonite church members who were worshiping in a brick church which still serves the congregation.[6] The Mennonites, each family from a different congregation in Europe, had not yet established a definite church organization. A feeble church union resulted, with no church roll and no rules. We decided not to join the church until some stable arrangement had been made by Daniel Hege. This resolution was then voted on by all who wished to become members. It affirmed that any Mennonite man or woman who signed would be a member, regardless of previous home or past record. But only those who signed would be members. Women could not sign, but a minister could sign for them upon their request. This served to give the church a firm foundation. Our family now became members of the Summerfield Mennonite Church.[7]

In the meantime, churches in Iowa had united with other churches to organize the General Conference Mennonite Church. The second meeting of this new conference was held in Wadsworth, Ohio, and the third in Summerfield. At this latter meeting it was decided to establish a Mennonite school and to send Hege as a traveling minister to create interest in the project. On the question of a suitable site for the school the delegates could come to no agreement. I was not a delegate, but sat with the choir. At a pause in the discussion I was led to ask politely, "May those who are not delegates also speak to the question?" The chairman, John Oberholtzer, gave a friendly assent. Then I spoke up in my deep bass voice, "The school should be built in the center of the Mennonite population. Today Ohio is the center; in another ten years Kansas may be. I propose Wadsworth." That rekindled interest in the discus-

[6]The following preachers were already in Summerfield: Daniel Hege from Iowa; John Schmidt, grandfather of preacher John Hirschler of Maxweiler, Germany; Christian Dettweiler of Hammerhof, Germany. The Summerfield congregation no longer uses this brick building, but built a new structure in 1906.

[7]The board of elders of the new church included Jacob Leisy, Daniel Hirschler, John Kraemer, Jacob Vogt, and Jacob Pletscher. The chairman, Daniel Hirschler, was elected preacher.

sion. Wadsworth was agreed on. I may add to that today that my spiritual insight had not deceived me.

The absence of Daniel Hege on these long trips threw extra burdens on the young minister, Daniel Hirschler. He soon asked for assistance. The election as well as the lot fell to my brother Jacob. He was gifted with a remarkable memory and a talent for poetry. He had a better education than I and in addition was well read, all a source of blessing to the congregation. But the ways of the Lord sometimes are mysterious. Brother Jacob's eyesight now began to fail, and he could not carry on all the work of a preacher. In fact, he finally took his family back to Iowa to live with his mother-in-law.

In the meantime, Daniel Hege, on a year's leave of absence, was visiting the eastern churches, preaching and arousing interest in the school project. Not only had he secured several thousand dollars' worth of pledges for the school, but, of greater importance, he had awakened among our people a sense of unity and a zeal for missions. Exhausted, he returned to Summerfield to preach and to tell about his experiences which drew us into better understanding and love for our brethren in the east whom we had never met. Then he left for Iowa on a similar mission.

On the way home, Hege took very ill in St. Louis. When he arrived at home he was half delirious, and the stamp of death was on his face. Because we were intimate friends he asked that I be his nurse. Those were unforgettable moments, both in his delirium and in his lucid moments, when he spoke of his great faith. He had put his earthly affairs in order, but he was called away from the great pioneer service he rendered the new Conference, a crippling blow to its early educational efforts. Yet his influence lingered long after he was laid to rest. Blessed be his memory! The words of Scripture are so true, "Their works follow after them."

This was 1864, the last year of the Civil War. So many men had fallen in battle that enlistees became few. The government resorted to the draft. My brother Valentin, David Ruth, John Eicher, and I were on the list. The question of nonresistance now became very real to our family, more vital than in peacetime. By nature I was and still am no coward. But the prin-

ciple of nonresistance, the main reason for our leaving Germany, had been firmly implanted by my father. I had even advised members of our church who had been persuaded to join an underground organization pledged to defend the nation by the use of arms to remain loyal to the principles of our faith. (At this time the rebels were about to cross the Mississippi, a move which would have imperiled our region. My stand was, however, strongly resented by undercover patriots. When Frederick Hecker called me a rebel and a traitor, the mob apparently threatened to hang me. But I could not be frightened into retracting my position. Later my American friends told me that American neighbors had testified to my loyalty to the Union. In this I saw the protecting hand of God.

After I had been drafted I had to settle this question with my conscience. It became clear to me that I was called to be a fighter, but not as a soldier. Several of us had agreed to pool our money ($2,000) to secure substitutes for those drafted.

My substitute, a young man from the Black Forest, Germany, Remigius Mantele, was at once sent to the front into several hard battles, but was never wounded. But after the armistice he contracted camp fever and returned home looking like a skeleton. We were able to nurse him back to health. He returned to Germany and was married, but wrote that he was not able to support himself and family. We sent him money to return with his family to America. They are now our good friends here in Halstead, Kansas.

Call to the Ministry

After the death of Daniel Hege the two ministers, Hirschler and Schmidt, pushed for another election. The third election took place in the fall of 1864 after the draft. Next to me brother Valentin had the most votes. When they drew the lot, it fell to me. All this I accepted with a deep sense of calm. Inwardly convinced that God was calling me to preach, I could quietly wait until the Lord would confirm that call through the wish of the congregation. Old Father John Schmidt ordained me. The text for my ordination sermon (1 Peter 5:6, 11) I had selected long before there was even a hint that I might be considered. So aptly did these words express my feelings,

convictions, and gratitude then as they do now that only a few Sundays later I could step from the plow into the pulpit and joyfully, yet humbly, pour out my heart to a devout and attentive audience. I must admit that I had a talent for public speaking of which I was not yet aware. But I was convinced then, and still am, that it was God who kindled the emotions and released His grace and power through His weak servant. The demoted pupil, the rash farmer's boy, the woodcutter and butcher, the ox driver and horse trainer, the hunter and the bold horseman, the hard-working farmer had by the grace of God now become a preacher.

This double role put an increased tax on my strength. Yet I was loath to give up my other work. At this time I was renting a farm from Juergen Reimer of Hanover, Germany. The farm was completely run down. Most of the fences had to be mended. For this we split rails in the woods. Besides doing all the rest of the farmwork, I helped Uncle Leisy with his threshing rig. Lehman and I pitched the bundles of grain into the feeder and lifted the heavy sacks of wheat out of the way. My weekdays were fully occupied with farm work. Only at night did I have free time to prepare my sermons. Fortunately, I preached only every third or fourth Sunday at first. For my preparation I depended mainly on the precious Bible, for I could not afford to buy books. I am still grateful for this, for the Bible abstains from crafty philosophy and stresses instead the real truth of theology. What I learned in school had in large part escaped me, and writing was particularly difficult. I wrote out only the skeleton of a sermon. I did not wish to read another man's sermon. In fact, I still think it is unbiblical to do so. Jesus did not say, "Go out into all the world and read another man's sermon to the people." Instead He said, "Preach the gospel." As I see it, that means that ministers should preach.

Since I could not write out my sermons, I had to accustom myself to thinking my thoughts through and had to practice the art of speaking. Thus I was protected from the temptation which probably confronts every young minister, namely, to preach, reading from a manuscript and thus limiting opportunity for the impulse of the moment and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. An incident in my first year as minister

strengthened my conviction. When Father Schmidt failed to appear on his designated Sunday, my brother said, "If I am to fill the gap I will read a sermon." That was against my principles and, as I knew, against the wishes of many of the congregation. Something seemed to say to me, "Then you must preach." I had no text, but I said, "Brethren, if none of you wants to preach, I will," and with that I went up to the pulpit, announced a hymn, read a chapter out of the Bible, and then opening the Bible at random found my text. My sermon seemed to fall into a pattern, and I could preach with such joyful absorption that no one guessed I had not been prepared. Thus I learned that the dear Lord in special situations often helps His children far beyond their comprehension.

To be honest, though, I was not always so fortunate in the pulpit. Shortly before I was elected minister I had had an argument with the young man who bought the farm on which we lived. He had argued that only a part of the Bible was God's word, and since he was well educated he could give good reasons. Neither of us would give in, though neither could convince the other. On the Sunday that I was delivering my third sermon (I then used to memorize my sermons) I saw him walk into the church. I was midway through the first of my three points. His appearance reminded me of our earlier argument. As long as I was developing my first thought I was all right, but then my memorized speech left me. There I stood, frantically trying to remember my second point. In all eyes I read, "He's stuck." But the Lord did not abandon me. I began to extemporize, but what I actually said I didn't later recall very well. It certainly was nothing very important. But through this I stumbled onto my line of thought and could conclude my sermon. My humiliation taught me that a preacher dare not let his thoughts wander.

All this happened while I worked all day as a farmer and studied at night. This co-ordination of bodily and spiritual effort helps to make a man strong. When the farm I was renting was sold, Lehman and I decided to sell our eighty-acre farm and together with our brother-in-law John Ruth and the Vogt brothers to buy a 320-acre prairie, the last unbroken prairie around Summerfield. Lehman and I got 100 acres,

and the others, 60 apiece. It was a good buy, but I had to ride five miles each way every day while breaking prairie. In the morning I arose at four, at noon rested in the camp wagon, got home at nine in the evening. In the fall we built a house and barn on the place. But it wasn't too bad, for I could meditate on my sermon while I was plowing.

At first this twofold job worked out well. But soon my duties as minister demanded more than the preparation of a sermon. It became necessary to have help on the farm, for which I paid out of my own pocket. Then came harvest time. My neighbors and I worked together. From early morning until late at night I rode the mowing machine. Then I studied until midnight. I can truthfully say that I did not have more than three hours' sleep per night. Yet to be fully prepared to preach I found it necessary to quit work Saturday afternoons at four to put the finishing touches on my sermon. We were at that time working on my neighbor's field. Though he was a church member, he wanted to charge me for that fourth of a day. That hurt, particularly since I had paid $6 a day for substitutes when I had to perform official duties. Only the knowledge that the Lord would help me kept up my spirits. And the Lord did not desert me.

About this time my father-in-law, David Ruth, bought a farm of 100 acres with seven acres of forest at the edge of Summerfield. When, soon afterward, he became too feeble to farm, he offered to sell it to me. My brother John who had shortly before married Katherine Ruth, their youngest daughter, bought my farm. I lost in the exchange, buying for $100 and selling for $60, and thereby fell more deeply into debt. Since the parents remained in half of the house, I had to add rooms at a cost of $1,000, bringing the cost of the farm to $11,700 of which I owed at least $5,000. I cut down the forest, fenced it in, plowed around the stumps, and then sold the acreage to Uncle John Kraemer for $1,000. Thus by hard labor I succeeded in reducing the debt. Since my father-in-law died soon after they came to Illinois, my mother-in-law was happy that she could live near her oldest daughter and yet be independent, but we young people were also richly blessed by the presence of one so devout and loving.

4

Reaching Out for the Conference

From now on my ministerial activities grew more strenuous. It was fortunate that I could live near the church. Good Father John Schmidt also wanted assistance as elder, and brother Jacob was chosen, but could not continue because of failing eyesight. At the request of the elders, another election was held. This time the choice lay between John Hirschler and myself. Since he was older than I and had preached longer, I suggested that we both be elected. On Hirschler's motion this was declined by the congregation. I was voted in as elder, without offending my fellow minister. Though I would gladly have been spared these extra responsibilities, I dared not set myself against the will of the church and the providence of God. So I bowed to the yoke and was ordained by Father Schmidt, but I do not remember the date.[1]

I begged Father Schmidt to continue his duties, but he said, "We'll do them together." But I insisted, "You are in every respect our elder—in fact, you are like a father to us." Finally the congregation agreed that he should continue in authority and responsibility and that I with the help of God would be as his right hand. So our patriarch remained as head of the church, an honor due him for his long years of leadership. But he was soon turning over all the duties of the eldership to me. By the time he was called home, I had been well trained in the responsibilities of my office and could assume them with confidence. This assurance stayed with me when my brother

[1]Ordained as an elder very likely in 1865.

returned from Iowa and again shared the services with me and John Hirschler. There were conflicts, which the Lord helped us to overcome. But all went well until we moved to Kansas when my brother, fully improved, could take over the duties of an elder.

Missouri

My first trip to Missouri lasted from April 23 to May 15, 1869.[2] To establish my right to a pass on the railroads, I had secured church and conference certificates, a confirmation by a notary public, and a note from Conrad Eisenmayer, a miller. The passes were to be picked up at the offices in St. Louis. Eisenmayer's recommendation quickly secured my Ohio-Mississippi pass. At the Missouri-Pacific office the General Agent asked facetiously, "What do you want with a pass from us?" Said I, "Preach." His quick retort was, "You must be a wonderful man to do any good to those Missourians." "That," said I, "best shows the great need in Missouri." I got my pass.

In the 150 miles from St. Louis to Tipton the railroad in the main followed the river, along rich land and through forest, bush, and brambles. Tipton was a little village, but an important market. Since I had announced our coming, we were met here and driven out ten miles to the Bethel Mennonite Church. The members were largely of Swiss origin, many of whom had visited with us in Summerfield on their trek to the West. The few Americans living in the neighborhood had joined the church, among them a Canadian, Bishop Brundage, who was chosen as minister. During the week we visited many homes, a week filled with rich experiences.

My full beard offended the (Old) Mennonite Brundage, but he was candid enough to tell me so. When I asked him to cite a passage in the Bible which forbade beards, he could not do so; therefore, he stalled, saying, "The beard is an outgrowth of sin. I'm sure Adam did not have one before the fall." I advised him to let his beard grow, for the Bible says, "Remain in Jericho until your beards have grown" (2 Sam. 10:5).

[2]Jacob Moellinger, a young Mennonite English teacher, accompanied me on the first half of this trip.

Biblical interpretations like these could not long hold the Swiss who were alert, well-read, and thinking people. One compromise, namely relating to foot washing, had already been effected between the (Old) Mennonites and the Swiss. Each member was to be free to participate or abstain as guided by his conscience. At the first celebration, Brundage preached on the text, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off" (Matthew 5:30). Then he exclaimed, "Whoever doesn't participate in the washing of feet, offends me. I will hew him off."

And the Swiss promptly withdrew. They wrote a letter to Brundage, pointing out that he had broken his agreement. In a careful statement they reasoned that the washing of feet had been commended by Jesus not as a commandment, but as an example of brotherly love. The (Old) Mennonites followed Brundage, but the two churches remained friends, frequently exchanging pulpits. I often went to Tipton to perform the services of an elder.

When it was time to leave, Christian Lugenbiel took us to Versailles, county seat of Hickory County. From there we were to go to Elkton, where there were three Mennonite churches, a small Swiss one, an Amish, and an Egli-Mennonite.[3] Neither coach nor railroad came to the town. Luckily we came across a man named Bernhard, ready to leave. He lived halfway down the road and would take us for a small fee. Off we went in his old farm wagon with its light load of flour and our baggage drawn by two small two-year-old mules. Downhill the little mules could pull the wagon and then we could walk with Bernhard, this upright Missourian. But up the many stony hills we had to help push the wagon. All the Missouri roads were abominable.

He told us that he had sided with the North in the recent war. One night he heard the hoofbeats of horses gathering in his yard. Quickly he slipped out of the house, hiding beyond the circle of men surrounding his home. He heard them break in and shout at his wife. Then they ran out, and in a moment all his buildings were in flames. He dared not stir lest he be

[3]The name *Egli-Mennonite* is derived from Henry Egli, founder of the Defenseless Mennonite Church. This later became known as the Evangelical Mennonite Church.

shot. For that was their purpose. Then he had joined the Union army, this earnest, serene man.

Night fell before we reached his 18 by 19-foot blockhouse. In this one room the family, including eight children, and we were to sleep on the straw-covered floor after supper. Later there was added a schoolteacher who before the rain came up had planned to camp outside with her brother. This was backwoods hospitality at its best. The people shared what they had. Of course, we paid them—they were poor.

From here we proceeded on foot to Elkton. On the way we met a certain Chrischner, an Egli-Mennonite. He gave us a meal, but we slept in the hotel. In our religious discussions he would always say, "Man, I think you are mistaken." For written proof I offered him my copy of Molenaar's ministers' handbook, but he didn't want to read books: "They leave so much to be said." When at last he did glance at it, he volunteered, "It is a good book."

From here it was a short distance to Elkton, a village of only a few houses. We found Peter Lehmann plowing on his farm. I greeted him and handed him my certification. "Minister?" he asked, "But not without the lot, I hope?" He read further, "Elder? But not without apprenticeship, I hope?" Satisfied with my negative answers, he said, "Well, then, come into my house," and from then on he was my friend. We often preached together, and I often benefited from his good advice.

I spent a week in Hickory County. I preached in Lehmann's church the first Sunday and again one weekday. During the week we visisted in the homes of members of the three churches. As I recall, the following Sunday we held a meeting in the Amish church. Most of the preaching fell to me, but preaching is not the hardest of a circuit rider's lot. It is the visiting, the answering of questions, the discussing of difficulties. Only when the circuit rider recognizes the human behind the troubled questioning can he learn and be of help.

Now I walked to Dallas County, to Warsaw and Louisburg, where I stopped with brother Rexroad who lived on Long Lane. My companion, Bernhard, left me here to return to Summerfield, and I went on alone. Eighty miles we had traveled together on foot in addition to the miles we traveled by wagon.

We had crossed many a stream in our boots. But on one occasion when we faced a thirty-foot stream this looked too precarious. We crossed this stream barefooted, carrying our boots and heavy packs on our backs.

The believers, neighbors of Rexroad, were very friendly. There weren't enough for a congregation, and many of them preferred to speak English. I visited and preached there. At this service in the schoolhouse several Americans pressed me to speak in English. My knowledge was too scanty to undertake a sermon, but I did speak briefly in English for which they seemed most grateful, since they seldom heard the Word of God preached.

An American brother, Manuel, offered to send his son Joseph with me to Lebanon, my next destination. "Do you think I would let such a man walk these twenty miles on foot?" was his response to my protest. Indeed, I was most happy to accept his kindness. I would have bought a horse, could I have found one cheap enough. So Joseph and I rode horseback through the most beautiful primeval forest I have ever seen. In Lebanon I bought Joseph a knife in remembrance of this occasion.

From here we went by stagecoach. A torrential rain began at our first station where we changed horses. The two did not pull together. Suddenly the coach seemed to settle on its side. It might even topple over. A sharp crack of the whip, a quick jerk, and the coach again careened onward on all four wheels. What a driver!

The anxiety over, the passengers began excitedly to tell of other experiences. Among them was the road agent who frequently traveled this way. Accidents, he said, were infrequent; oh, occasionally someone broke a leg or an arm, but only when a neck was broken was it considered an accident. Typically American! All along the road, trees were terraced up the hillsides. Once we forded a stream in which the waters were so clear that we could see the pebbles on the bottom. At daybreak we arrived at the depot.

I caught the train for Rolla, where I expected to visit my Prussian friend, Peter Wiebe, who had been with us in Summerfield and with whom I had carried on a correspondence. I should have gotten off, though, at a way station five miles be-

yond Rolla. As it was, I walked five miles to their farm, over flooding creeks. When I arrived at the blockhouse I found Wiebe busily kneading dough, and his comrade, Bansemer, a former Prussian guard, in hip-length boots. Both bachelors, they were seeking adventure, and here in these rock mountains they found plenty. After two enjoyable days with them, I left for St. Louis and home, rich in experiences.

A General Conference Session

The General Conference met at the time of the dedication of the Wadsworth school.[4] The Summerfield church was always a warm supporter of the Conference and all its undertakings. To this session it sent as delegates Jacob Leisy as chairman, John Hirschler, Daniel Baer, and me. Most of the building committee and the eastern delegates had already arrived, as well as several delegates from Canada, including Samuel Bauman. We were welcomed cordially. John Oberholtzer, the Conference president, conducted the opening services with reverence and dignity. We then gathered in the great hall where the president of the new school dedicated the building and followed this with an address. He had asked me, one of the youngest ministers present, to preach the first sermon in the new school. This unusual honor was perhaps extended to me because at the previous Conference session I had suggested Wadsworth as the site for the school.

Although this request came to me as a real surprise I was not wholly unprepared for the occasion. I had prepared a sermon which in the mysterious providence of God proved extraordinarily fitting as a first sermon in the new institution. The Lord graciously blessed my feeble efforts and my imperfect presentation and thoughts. He enabled me to speak freely and sincerely so that the message achieved its purpose in this select group, namely, to warm the hearts and awaken a sense of assurance and Christian mission among Mennonites. The sermon was later given wider circulation by appearing in the first Mennonite paper, edited by J. H. Oberholtzer. A young Swiss, Abraham Moser, a member of the audience, had written out my sermon

[4]The Wadsworth school was built under the guidance of Brothers Ephraim Hunsberger, Michael Lehmann, and my uncle Daniel Krehbiel.

from memory, recording it almost verbatim, and had submitted it for publication. In this way my name became known to many, a real asset in later years.

This had been the first conference I attended. After this I was present at every Conference session, serving as a delegate of a church. Attending these conferences in various states required much traveling, and travel enriches one's knowledge.

Wadsworth and Berne

At the close of the conference, the Wadsworth school began its first year with Christian Schowalter as principal. A year later, Carl Justus van der Smissen was called to direct the school. At a called meeting of the Conference in Wadsworth, I was commissioned to visit many of the churches in the interest of the Conference. Before I could start, though, I went to Wadsworth to confer with van der Smissen about some misunderstandings in regard to his work. Here I met a young ministerial student, Samuel Sprunger from Berne, Indiana, newly elected minister to his home church. He begged me to visit his home church because other denominations were so busy proselyting among its members. Upon his urging I left for Fort Wayne, Indiana, and thence by train to the village of Newville. Here, in order to arrive in the Swiss settlement on Saturday evening, I hired a buggy at the rate of $6.00 for the three-mile drive to Berne.

My driver assured me he knew where Christian Baumgartner lived. He drove to a certain farm, saying this was the place, dropped me off, and promptly drove away. It was already dark. I knocked at the door, and a woman answered. She said it was Nicolaus Baumgartner who lived here. Christian lived several miles down the road. I explained my purpose, saying that Samuel Sprunger had sent me. Since she also was a Swiss, and perhaps a Mennonite, I felt I might, nevertheless, have come to the right place. "Maybe I could stay here overnight?"

"Wait till my husband comes home," she hedged. "If it's all right with him, yes." A half hour later the husband appeared, a square-shouldered Swiss. He eyed me closely without saying a word. Again I told my predicament and asked

him whether I might stay for the night. "Man, I think you are in error," came his brusque reply. Said I, "Not if you are Mennonites." Said he, "Mennonites we are; but we don't belong to them."

"That doesn't matter," I said, "because I am really sent to just such as you. If I may stay with you for the night, I may have come to the right place after all." After carefully weighing this, he grudgingly gave his consent.

By degrees I learned that my host was not only a member but also a minister of the *Neu-Täufer* (Apostolic) Mennonites. The next morning, Sunday, my semi-colleague (he would acknowledge no closer connection) was very uncommunicative. He had given me a good supper, a comfortable bed, and now a good breakfast. But nothing more would he say. Finally he admitted that he was driving to his church for services. Since I was to learn about these unattached churches I felt that my mistake was a part of divine leading. So I said, "If it is permitted, I should like to go along." At first he was silent, then looking at his wife, he replied gruffly, "You may." After he had harnessed the horses I waited for an invitation to get into the buggy. He only glanced at me. I got in, and we drove on. Nothing was said during the several miles to the church, located in a pleasant wood. The wagon was driven under the trees and I helped unhitch the horses, although he tried to forbid me. Then he strode away, leaving me standing there. I mingled with the people and went in with them when the time came. It was a very large four-square frame building, unplastered. The benches were boards laid across sawhorses. In the center was a long table likewise made of boards. At its head sat my host, Baumgartner, and other prominent men.

Although uninvited, I had the temerity to sit down at this table, but at the lower end. When the congregation was seated, a dignified but friendly man entered and came to the table. All along the aisle people leaned forward to give him a brotherly kiss. He did not unbend, however, even when the preachers leaned forward to kiss him. His bearing made me think that he must be the bishop. So he proved to be, seating himself at the head of the table. The meeting then began with a song, followed by prayer by Baumgartner and another song, after

which a visiting minister, Dotterer, preached a rambling sermon. The service ended with song and prayer.

Behind the church was a small building in which one could hear plates and cups rattling. People who came out obviously had eaten. The preachers went in, but no one invited me to come in. Perhaps they wanted to avoid further contact with the stranger with a full black beard and the customary worldly suit. For a while I regretted having come; in fact, I went back to the wagon, intending to leave. But my purpose for coming won out and I went back determined to eat dinner, come what may. On the way back a friendly man urged me to go in and eat. Heartened by his kindness, I hurried toward the dining room, where I met Baumgartner just coming out. "One has to help himself," he volunteered as we passed. "So I notice," I smiled, and went in and ate. Apparently the ministers had been discussing me, for the bishop, Strohm by name, drew me into friendly conversation until time for the afternoon service. Again he left me standing.

After the customary introductory service the bishop preached a very helpful sermon. Baumgartner then invited any brother who wished to speak now. No one responded. Finally I rose to ask whether I was included in the invitation. My treatment so far had led me to feel that I was considered an intruder, not a brother. The silence that followed lent consent to that impression. But I continued, "I do not want to offend your regulations, but if permitted, I should like to speak briefly." Baumgartner looked at the bishop and then nodded permission. I explained my Conference obligation, told them about the new school and the mission work, and then invited them to participate in the work. Then, thanking them for their close attention, I sat down. I supposed the congregation would be dismissed. But not so.

Dotterer, the visiting preacher, then rose to declare that all schools were signs of pride, missions nothing but a swindle and a refuge for lazy men. He illustrated the last point with the story of a young missionary he had known who, after a year on the mission field, had declared himself a sick man and had returned home, a fathead. "We have missions in Austria and Hungary," he said, "but our workers are not college educated.

One doesn't need schools of higher learning." He continued prattling a lot of mocking nonsense, while the audience apparently enjoyed the dressing down he was giving the intruder.

I was never one to take defeat lying down, especially when a stand for truth, justice, and God was needed. When the man paused, I asked, "Are you through?" Then I arose and asked him whether he could prove that the Austrian and Hungarian traveling apprentices were members of his church; whether he had ever attended school; whether he felt that with his present education he could learn a foreign language well enough to translate the Scriptures. He had no answer. I continued, "You say you knew a man who after a year on the mission field returned home with a swelled head. I will not question the truth of this statement. But because one hireling pretended illness, do you have the right to sling mud at the men who, although they could have held responsible and well-paid positions in this country owing to their education, nevertheless, in order to save souls for the Lord chose to hold their lives cheap for the Lord, to endure privations in strange lands, and even to face the constant danger of death?"

The audience was astonished. The scoffer sat down, sheathing the sword of his loose tongue. Truth had proved stronger than half-truths. My mistake of the night before had not been without meaning. The meeting now disbanded. I was happy to accept Bishop Strohm's invitation to spend the night with him. The evening was spent in edifying conversation. When the opportunity arose, I asked him whether a statement Dotterer had made in his sermon was part of the belief of their church. I had gulped when he said, "Isaac was conceived by the Holy Ghost," but thought it was only a blunder. But he proved his contention with, "Abraham probably refrained after he received the promise of the Holy Ghost." Strohm asked eagerly, "Did you notice that, too? I shall have to reprimand him." This man Dotterer claimed to belong to the only true people of God!

The next week I spent with the Swiss churches at Newville near Berne. On Monday morning, after taking leave of Strohm, I went to Christian Baumgartner who lived nearby. His welcome was friendly and brotherly. He was the oldest minister in the church at Newville. That afternoon we visited with the

other minister, Brother Augsburger, and with many others. A meeting was arranged for the next day. So many came that they even stood outside the windows to listen, perhaps intrigued by reports of my talk on Sunday. News traveled fast. Because the Mennonites were considered a dissolving sect, the other churches felt free to proselyte among them. My visit was very welcome, and my first sermon was essentially one of encouragement with special emphasis on Mennonite tradition and the new awakening. Since doors and windows were open to the summer weather, I gave my voice full rein and was heard by those standing far away. All afternoon crowds followed wherever I visited, and inexperienced as I was, I constantly had to explain Scripture passages and doctrinal questions.

The audience was still larger the next day. Many people came to speak to me afterward. Among them was an Evangelical minister who exclaimed, "That is how I preach the gospel." Apparently the people imagined all Mennonite ministers were shy as were the two local men. But my bold declarations stirred among Mennonites an awareness of brotherhood and their own worth, and among the others a respect for Mennonites.

In the audience had been a Mrs. David Baumgartner whose physician husband had been unable to attend the meetings. Dr. Baumgartner had written many articles which I had found thought provoking. But his coolness of manner when I visited him later almost repelled me. I could not get *en rapport* with him. Recalling that he was either son or nephew of old Christian Baumgartner, and that they had on their honeymoon had an unpleasant experience with a church in Ohio, I dared to touch this sensitive spot by asking, "Doctor, why did you leave the Mennonites?" He answered bitterly, "The Mennonites are dead spiritually." Said I, "You should have stayed with them to awaken them."

"No, no," he protested, "the Mennonites have forsaken God, and God has abandoned them. At least," he amended at my reproving look, "the Swiss." I took him up on that.

"That criticism is too sharp and cannot be proved. But if it were true, you should have remained steadfast to strengthen the dying." Evasively he replied, "Life is easier if one gives a little here and a little there." And therein he was

right—but, I ask, is it right to give a little here and a little there? Later the doctor became a minister, doing much good.

I now went to preach in the old church on the Münsterberg, now Berne, where Brother Christian Sprunger was the friendly minister. We visited in many homes during the week, meeting new problems. Every night we were up until past midnight. Finally it was Sunday evening. I was to leave on a three o'clock train so hoped to get some sleep beforehand. But at ten o'clock another brother dropped in at the Baumgartners. Several times I remarked to him, "I must get some sleep," but he stayed on until one o'clock. Finally I snatched an hour and a half rest. Then I was off per wagon to Newville, and by train to Fort Wayne, my destination Elkhart.

I often returned to Newville and to Berne. On one such visit I ordained S. F. Sprunger as elder of the church. That gave rise to the rumor that he believed in infant baptism, since, it was said, Krehbiel believes so, and he ordained Sprunger. This misunderstanding arose because our church discipline permitted, "Those who were baptized as children may join the church on confession of faith"—a rule most sparingly used. Sprunger asked me to write an article for the Conference paper, explaining the stand. I wrote back, "It's better to keep still. That is the quickest way to squash it. If we respond, the rumor will gain importance." The whole matter has now long been forgotten.

At Fort Wayne I decided to take a hotel room for the day, since I had had little sleep, had ridden all night, and had to lay over for some hours. The good rest refreshed me. The next day I rode a zigzag course to Elkhart, having to change trains frequently. Arriving at three in the morning, I elected to stay in the depot, instead of dragging a stranger out of bed. Most depots were most uncomfortable and not free from pickpockets. Consequently, again no sleep! After breakfast I presented myself to John F. Funk in his bookstore. As a faithful reader of the *Herald of Truth* which he published, I had a good reception. He showed me his small printshop and then took me home for dinner and for supper. He was friendly in good Pennsylvania German fashion, but he did not dare to invite me into his pulpit. The older members of the congregation had

been deeply offended lately when a stranger had preached there.

My travel time now was up. Tired but full of rich experiences I came home to find my family well. I had stopped only once on the return, namely Minocco, Illinois, where I found relatives and friends and where I preached and administered the Lord's Supper. This trip lasted from the second to the thirtieth of August 1870.

5

Mennonites, Together or Alone?

IT MAY BE WELL to bring together here some of the events I omitted in the previous chapter. At the General Conference in Wadsworth in 1866, the first one I attended as a delegate, Christian Schowalter was called to be a teacher and the housefather at the new school. To him and the faculty committee was given the commission to secure a professor of theology from Germany. In the year 1866 Carl van der Smissen and his wife and two daughters arrived and took charge of the school. The school had opened in the fall of 1865 with Daniel F. Risser as German teacher and A. Fritz as English teacher.[1]

The Conference had appointed me as a field secretary to the extent that my work in Summerfield would permit. My first assignment was to the Zion Mennonite Church at Franklin, Iowa. It was my difficult task to persuade the members to release Christian Schowalter for the call to the Wadsworth school. The teaching situation then was quite different from what it is as I write this. Schowalter was the only teacher among the newly immigrated Mennonites. In the eastern states there were young men who could teach in English, but could understand the Pennsylvania German dialect.

The year before the great Chicago fire I was opportunely on a

[1]H. P. Krehbiel (*History of the General Conference*, Volume I) reports that the school opened officially on January 2, 1868, with Christian Schowalter as principal and teacher of German and A. Fritz as teacher of English. Carl J. van der Smissen arrived in December 1868 and took over his duties the first days of 1869. Daniel F. Risser began teaching in the German department in December 1871.

mission trip to that large and beautiful city. This city boasted a modern water system and a huge fire engine. My wife's cousin, Gerhard Dahlem, took me to see this modern miracle. When I inquired whether this engine could take care of all the fires in the city, he boastfully slapped his chest, "Oh, yes, we have the entire city under control; a large fire in Chicago is impossible."

But the next year we had a very dry fall—so dry that a pile of dusty shavings beside the woodpile on our farm began to burn like gunpowder. And in Chicago a fire driven by a mighty wind destroyed seven miles of the beautiful city. Neither the water system nor the fire engine could control the flames. Nor did the conflagration cease until the Almighty caused the roaring wind to veer, as though with a command: "So far and no farther." After all, human achievements are small compared with the power of the Creator of us all.

Soon after the fire, I again passed through Chicago on my way to Iowa. Again Gerhard Dahlem accompanied me around the city. But what a contrast! In many places embers were still glowing in this cemetery of ruined buildings. In other places, great new buildings were already arising. But amid the ruins also stood the tents of New York wholesalers. This energetic resumption of activity was not defiance, but rather obedience to God's command, "Fill the earth and make it subject to you." God-willed human energy was overcoming destruction.

I visited also Joliet and Minocca to which my schoolmate Gerhard Dahlem and his immediate relatives had now moved. They were not all Mennonites, but certainly German and Christians. They asked me to preach for them and to administer the Lord's Supper. This service I rendered also on later visits. My return journey also took me to the churches at Franklin, Donnellson [Zion], and West Point. I went to Iowa frequently in those years since the Western District Conference usually met there.[2]

[2]The Western District Conference was probably being held in Washington County. Brother John Rupp was the minister. He was from Maxweiler by Neuberg on the Danube in Bavaria. When Rupp moved to Moundridge, Kansas, Brother William Galle became the preacher. Later he, too, moved to Moundridge where he was teacher and later preacher in the Mennonite Church at Christian, a small hamlet near Moundridge. He also was an elder, but my brother Valentin retained that position in the Christian church until his death. When the town of Moundridge developed, the Christian church divided, and Brother Galle was made the minister of the new West Zion Mennonite Church.

Often I went by steamboat from St. Louis to Keokuk, because it was more comfortable traveling.

I arrived home safely, to find plenty of farm work awaiting me. My dear wife was a very good manager and had excellent helpers. I must add, however, that a minister's wife has a hard time when the husband in addition to much preaching has to travel half the time, as was customary in those days. The wives of today have small conception of those early hardships, and it appears somewhat doubtful whether they would be equally capable of handling them. Blessed is the man to whom God has given a good wife!

Between 1866 and 1874 we young ministers in the Conference were confronted with many unpleasant as well as pleasant problems. Perhaps one of the most difficult problems was one that arose at the Wadsworth school. When Carl Justus van der Smissen was called to this school it was our understanding that he was to be the professor of theology, while Christian Schowalter was to serve as principal and housefather of the school. Carl J. van der Smissen, however, perhaps through some vagueness in the correspondence, understood that he was to take charge of all school affairs. An unpleasant situation arose rather quickly. One day van der Smissen announced to all school personnel, "From now on all questions must be referred to me. Those are the terms of my call." Schowalter, abiding by the terms of his call from the Conference, could not let this ride without protest. A special Conference session was called in Wadsworth. In fact, because we were new to organizational matters, many sessions were held in Wadsworth, all of which I attended.[3]

[3]Among the friends in Wadsworth and the Conference, the following are listed: Brother John Oberholtzer, president of the Conference; Ephraim Hunsberger, elder of the Wadsworth church; Christian Hunsberger, who later moved to Halstead; Amanda Hunsberger (Mrs. Hackenburg), now of Halstead; Brother Kolb, treasurer of the Wadsworth school; Brother Yoder; Brother Levi C. Schimmel, first business manager of the school; Brothers Moses Gottschall, Christian Klemmer, Jacob and Manasses Moyer, Fritz Augsburger, of Trenton, Ohio; S. F. Sprunger, I. A. Sommer, and A. S. Funk, and others I learned to know when they were students in Wadsworth; A. B. Shelly, of Pennsylvania, elected minister the same year as Christian Krehbiel and professors Fritz and Jonas Schultz.

After the first Conference session in Wadsworth I stopped at Ashland and Hayesville, Ohio, where I had worked when I first came to America. Many of the people had heard the sermon in Wadsworth by the "green American" and were much surprised. Their minister was the old brother, John Risser, an educated and well-read man. In my visit with this well-read minister, I surmised that I dropped considerably in his estimation, for he was so much wiser than this "young farmer." The congregation was composed of Mennonites and other Protestants. Many in the congregation wanted to join either the Lutherans or the Reformed, but the Mennonites objected.

The next time the Conference met in Wadsworth the Hayesville congregation asked me to preach. I accepted, but suggested to young John Risser that he first ask permission of the minister, a Lutheran pastor. It was granted grudgingly. When I arrived at the church on Sunday I received a cool reception. At the close of the service the pastor announced, "Pastor Krehbiel from Summerfield wants to preach this afternoon." Despite the rebuff, I asked him to participate in the service. This he refused, not wishing to degrade himself by serving with a mere farmer. Later he condescended to ride with us to Wadsworth, having perhaps received a new insight regarding farmers.

To give a chronological review of these years between 1864 and 1874 would be too tedious. But a few sketches may prove enlightening. First I shall tell of a visit to the oldest Swiss church in America, the one at Sonnenberg, Ohio. I made this visit on the occasion of the conference which was marked by the first attendance of ministers from the Russian churches in Kansas. Since the conference had to be recessed until Monday, several of my Sonnenberg friends invited me to go home with them for the week end. Several of the older brethren of this church were opposed both to the Conference and to our Wadsworth school. A visit with them might, therefore, prove profitable. If I remember correctly, Dietrich Gaeddert and Heinrich Richert also went along. We had a pleasant welcome from old friends, as well as from the two older ministers, Nussbaum and Lehman, who were, however, a little reticent.[4] They permitted

[4]Probably Jacob Nussbaum and possibly John T. Lehmann who was really not a minister but rather the chorister and organizer of the young people's work in the Sonnenberg church.

me to preach on Sunday, but did not wish to participate in the service. Had the two Russian brethren been on the platform alone, they probably would have participated, but they could not sit with one who wore a full black beard. Our visit was very short since the conference began at 10 o'clock Monday morning.

As an example of why these older men were opposed to the Conference and its institutions, I should like to tell of an incident that happened a little later. Some dear old brother was visiting the school. Brother van der Smissen, having personally conducted a tour, including a class, asked, "What do you think of it?" Came the answer, "Oh, it's all right," but then, twitching van der Smissen's robe, he asked: "But what about this?" Bluntly van der Smissen answered, "We don't give tailoring lessons here." Later, in relating this to me he remarked that he had given this question the answer it deserved. That did not win the older people to him.

Conference Work

Despite the opposition to my beard, I had hopes for a while of bringing the Sonnenberg church into the Conference. More than half of the members desired affiliation, but the older ones needed time to adjust themselves. At this some of the members impatiently joined other churches. Thinking that the rest would follow, other members pressed to organize a church which would join the Conference. S. F. Sprunger, strengthened by his victory in Berne, Indiana, proceeded to organize the new Salem church. As I had predicted, only a small group joined the new church. The majority, hesitating to offend the older members, remained with the old church which now leaned toward the (Old) Mennonites in Elkhart, Indiana. The same thing might have happened at Bluffton, Ohio, where old John Moser was opposed to the Conference. When Brother Christian Welty asked me whether they should separate, I advised him not to. This church later joined the General Conference.

In 1864 and 1865 I often traveled to Bloomington, Illinois, to perform the offices of an elder. There was a settlement here of Mennonites from Baden, among them a John Funk and his children. The old man had been a preacher, but not an elder. His son, Henry, who had emigrated to America many years before,

had married the sister of Daniel Hege. A good many Amish also lived here, but they would not accept the Funks who believed neither in the simple dress nor in foot washing.

Although the Funk family did not comprise a congregation, they wished to keep up their Mennonite affiliation. Even the young people wished to be baptized into the faith and to receive the Communion from a Mennonite elder. One of Henry Funk's daughters even came to Summerfield for her catechetical instruction. Old Father Funk had himself given the instruction to two of his children and to two daughters of his sister, Mrs. Neff. But I administered baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Henry Funk was very fond of Goethe's *Faust*. One evening we became involved in a lively debate which lasted until after midnight. Goethe's wisdom and flow of language did, however, have to give way before God's truth. Here in this community where I frequently visited and preached I also met Joseph Stucky, pastor of a large progressive Amish church. We hoped that this church would join the Conference. But it did not, even though its sister church at Noble, Iowa, where Benjamin Eicher was elder, later did.

At this point I should like to digress a little in order to insert some interesting observations about events and practices of those early years. The 1863 conference was held in Summerfield. Although it was October, the eastern delegates came dressed in summer clothes, thinking they were going south. To their surprise there was a heavy snowfall. Fortunately, a warm sun soon melted the snow, and the rest of the time the weather was fine. Summerfield in those days still reflected hinterland conditions. We still rode in heavy farm wagons, unlike Pennsylvania where there were many conveniences. One of the delegates remarked, "The people here are as content to ride in their box wagons as if they were riding in coaches." Actually the people at Summerfield considered it an unpardonable luxury to ride in anything but a farm wagon. At an auction where I once bid $35 for an old carriage I heard someone whisper, "That Chris Krehbiel ought to pay his debts." The brother was right. Yet, if he had only known, I often had only three hours of sleep because I put in so many hours working on my debts and for my family that I had to study at night lest I feed my congregation only husks.

After such a week my head would fairly split as I jolted along on the heavy wagon to preaching services.

A few years later when the Conference met in Pennsylvania for the first time, we saw the difference between the East and the West. They had fine large homes, with carpets on the floor. We were almost afraid to step into their homes. Not only did the people have elegant buggies, but their helpers had them as well. At a later conference the difference was less marked. Their furnishings now had grown old and shabby; our simple ones had been replaced with fine new ones.

Among the delegates to the Summerfield conference were several Canadian brethren from Ontario and a young man, Eusebius Hirschy from Pennsylvania. He had just come from the Indian Territory where he had gone through the reservation on horseback to preach the gospel to the Indians. Now he felt it was up to them. They could do what they wanted. This represented his understanding of missionary work. Yet he was a pious man, holding prayer meetings between sessions of the Conference. Later he traveled in the Orient, where he died on a similar missionary venture.

The Ontario brethren mentioned earlier wanted to know whether the Conference stood firmly for the tenet of pacifism. If it did not, they would lose their exemption from military service if they joined the Conference. It was a delicate question. We of the Palatinate had had to give up the practice of nonresistance although holding fast to the doctrine. In fact, that was why we came to the United States in such large numbers. The General Conference statements of principle declared allegiance to the tenets of Menno, but without stressing especially the doctrine of nonresistance. Since no forthright answer was given to them on this question, and since girls were not permitted to attend the school at Wadsworth, the Canadian brethren withdrew from the Conference.

I have told these episodes so that younger generations may be aware of the difficulties which beset the Conference in its infancy. They may further recognize how God led our people, weak in numbers and organization, and protected them from dissensions within and dangers without. If this Conference is to be blessed, the members must evince the same unselfishness

that activated the founders, without asking, "What do we get out of this?

The Beginning of Missions

The founders of the Conference had had two aims; one, to unite all the Mennonites of America, if possible; two, to provide a school for training ministers and teachers. Many of the graduates of Wadsworth did enter the teaching profession both in English and in German schools. Others became ministers. One student, S. S. Haury, decided under the guidance of van der Smissen, who was a missions enthusiast, to prepare himself for the mission field. Without consulting the Conference, van der Smissen asked the Mennonite Mission Society of Holland whether they would accept Haury into their society.

Complications at once arose. An offer of $1,000 for a General Conference missions program had been received from Jacob Leisy, but this gift would not be available if the candidate went out under the Dutch society. The Conference, however, did not wish to reject completely the offer of the society, although it was felt that eventually the source and strength of our mission activity would and should be in America. If the society should wish to support Haury, the Conference felt it could not be responsible for either his education or for his missionary placement. It would, therefore, have to postpone its endeavors until a suitable young man might be found.

Haury began to vacillate when he found that the Conference questioned the advisability of affiliation with the Dutch society. Van der Smissen, on the other hand, was determined that he should go to Holland. He declared sharply, "The General Conference can't maintain an independent mission field; you don't have the men for the work." But one of the young men responded, "You are right. We don't have the men today who are prepared to manage a mission, but the Lord can lead them to us." The present standing of our missions testifies to that faith. Carl J. van der Smissen some years later in a visit to the Darlington Station said to this same young man, "I have admired your talent and without envy."

The conditions as laid down by the Dutch Mennonite Society to van der Smissen were such that the Conference did not agree

to them. "The General Conference," they wrote, "shall assume the costs of the education of the missionary and the maintenance of himself and family on the field and of his pension when that becomes necessary, or of his widow and children who are under age, and of all travel expenses. The society will place the man; the American Conference may make suggestions." In other words, "You Americans may foot the bills, but you may have nothing to say."

Since the alliance with Holland seemed doomed to failure, B. C. Roosen, a Mennonite minister in Hamburg, wrote a letter to me. He tried to show that our uniting with the Dutch Mennonite Society would strengthen this mission service and promote Mennonite unity. By dividing our efforts, the cause of foreign missions would suffer. He begged me to use my influence to interest the Conference in the Dutch society. My answer was that I could not persuade the Conference to subordinate itself to another group. The future of the Mennonites was in America.

The Conference decided to appoint S. S. Haury as their first fledgling missionary. He was to study in Germany. The future now was in the hands of the Lord.

At the beginning of the seventies the Wadsworth school began to run into debt, although it was a good school. Many people felt that the school should be self-sustaining. Efforts had to be made to cover the debts. Daniel Krehbiel, who was treasurer at that time, aroused interest in the East. I was asked to do the same in the West, which at that time included everything west of Wadsworth in Ohio.

In 1870 I was traveling through Ohio and Indiana when the Franco-German war broke out. Every day I bought a newspaper on the train. In Berne, Indiana, they had only the Pony Express. So when I got to Berne the people were still discussing the outbreak of the war, even though the French were practically conquered. Today Berne has daily communication.

6

The Die Is Cast for Kansas

Times were troublous in the seventies, not only in America but also in Germany, France, and Russia. Revolutionary social and political changes were instigated. In the process Prussia withdrew its exemption of Mennonites from military service. Only a short time later Russia, which originally had attracted Mennonite settlers by guaranteeing them freedom from military service indefinitely, likewise retracted its solemn promise to Mennonites. Many of the brethren, therefore, decided to emigrate. A letter of inquiry from Cornelius Jansen of Berdyansk came addressed to Daniel Hege. Since he had died, I answered the letter. This new crisis, in a sense, marks the beginning of the next major period of my life.

Contacts with Russian Mennonites

In the preceding years I had often had visitors in Summerfield, Illinois, where I then lived, from brethren in Prussia and Russia and through them had learned much of the conditions in their home lands. Among these was Aaron Wiebe from Prussia, with whom I subsequently maintained a steady correspondence; and Bernhard Warkentin from Russia, of whom I shall have much to write later on. Through my correspondence as well as through newspaper articles I was kept quite well informed of the reaction of the Mennonites in Prussia and Russia to the requirement that they perform military duty.

There was at that time a large Mennonite congregation in

Berdyansk, Russia, whose elder was Leonhard Sudermann. He and representatives of several other Mennonite congregations were delegated to present a petition in St. Petersburg for the continuation of the nonmilitary privileges of the Mennonites.

One of the members of Sudermann's church was Cornelius Jansen who, like Sudermann, was from Prussia and well educated. He was Prussian consul in Berdyansk and a man of great vision. A trend having developed in the Berdyansk congregation to seek a new home somewhere in Asia, Jansen cast his eyes toward America. To learn something of American conditions he wrote to various people here. One of his letters was directed to Daniel Hege but with an address in Pennsylvania. The letter 1874 came into the hands of John Oberholtzer, who at that time was the publisher of the only Mennonite periodical in America and president of the General Conference. Conditions among the European Mennonites were then less well known to those in the East than to us in the West. Accordingly, Oberholtzer sent Jansen's letter to me in Summerfield. Hege was no longer living. Obviously, so important an inquiry must have an answer, and I undertook to reply. Out of that decision there grew my extensive participation in the immigration of European Mennonites to America.

I wrote Jansen at length, depicting American conditions as fully and as truthfully as I could with my limited experience at writing. But because I realized that in Europe conditions in America were measured in terms of European experience, and that what I wrote might easily be misconstrued and misunderstood, I closed my letter with a paragraph to the following effect: "My description of conditions here is accurate in accordance with our knowledge of things and the way we view them; but in order to prevent any misunderstanding, I feel I must add that in this country every ordinary farmer and every businessman in ordinary circumstances *must* be his own best workman." I knew that many Prussian and Russian landowners did little with their own hands. Management was their function—cheap labor did the actual work. I wanted it understood that that system could not be employed in America.

It was not long before I had Jansen's reply, thanking me for the information I had given and saying that he understood it all

quite well except the closing sentence. He could see that if a hired hand was sick, one's own son would feed the horses; or if a maid was ill or away, one's daughter would do the milking; but that every owner must be his own best worker, that he could not understand.

I had attained my purpose; I had correctly surmised that they would not grasp this point in Russia; and should they come to America unwarned and face the bald facts in person, they might accuse me of misrepresentation.

To clear up the matter I wrote Jansen how dear labor was in America and how, because of high wages and great opportunity, ambitious young people could easily start out for themselves, so that it was impossible to hold good laborers for any length of time. One had, accordingly, to get along with young, inexperienced help, or perchance with the less intelligent types or with the old, failing which one often had to make out without any outside help at all. I expressed the hope that with this amplification he would grasp the purpose of my earlier closing sentence, and would convey it to any persons contemplating coming to America, so that I might suffer no reproaches for false reports. Later, when immigrants arrived I learned that my warning words had come to the attention of many.

I might note here that Jansen also corresponded with friends in Canada and was instrumental in directing a large movement of Mennonites from Russia to that country.

Delegates Arrive

In the summer of 1872 four Mennonite young men who had left Europe came to Summerfield, Illinois: Bernhard Warkentin, Philipp Wiebe, Peter Dick, and Jacob Böhr. They were traveling for pleasure and experience, not primarily to look for settlement sites. Still, they thought they might learn something of advantage to their distressed home folks and to that end traveled through parts of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa. During their trip, Warkentin's fiancee died in Europe, and he decided to spend the following winter in Summerfield. This sojourn led to a life-long friendship between us.

That a Russian Mennonite was staying in Summerfield and that a large delegation from Russia was expected in 1873 to

explore lands which, if found satisfactory, might attract large numbers of immigrants soon became known to the western railroads, which owned large tracts of land in Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, and other states. Assuming that Warkentin was an advance agent, they sent representatives to Summerfield to apprise him, and all of us, of their available lands and to offer us free transportation for inspection tours. One of these, a Texan, took Warkentin and J. E. Schmidt and others of the Summerfield church for a journey through Texas. Though they were pleased with the soil there, they felt Texas was not suited to Mennonites from Russia as the climate was too warm.

George Herriot, an Englishman, was then a land agent for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company. On the instructions of his superiors he also sought us in Summerfield, praised his company's open lands, and presented plans for colonizing them. He also offered free transportation to examine the lands and discover their good qualities. After several such visits Warkentin and others of our community decided to explore Kansas. They were favorably impressed and when A. E. Touselin, an important official of the Santa Fe railroad, held out prospects of very favorable colonizing terms, Warkentin left on him the impression that he would persuade the delegation expected from Russia to see Kansas. No doubt he felt, and quite rightly, that the detailed reports he had sent to Russia would prevail on the coming delegates to select him at least as guide, if not as leader. In this he was greatly mistaken, for the deputation, as it was called, ignored him.

The deputation of 1873, representing various Russian and Prussian Mennonite congregations, at first passed by Summerfield. Traveling via Pennsylvania, it headed for Canada which offered exemption from military service and other conditions, including closed settlements in Manitoba.

After the deputation had made its tour of Canada, some of its members decided to visit parts of the United States. Warkentin went to meet them and accompanied them through Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri to Summerfield, Illinois.

Three members of the deputation—Peters, Wiebe, and Buhr —reached Summerfield ahead of the others. Soon after their

arrival, Goodenow, a rather smooth representative of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad, appeared in Summerfield to laud his company's lands and offer free transportation for inspection. As the prices he quoted seemed favorable, the three deputies decided to see the lands. They needed interpreters, however, and as we in the Summerfield Mennonite Church had become interested in finding new lands for ourselves, John A. Ruth and I were delegated to accompany them.

We went to Parsons, Kansas, and scouted in various directions from that center, going as far as the Kansas-Texas boundary.[1] Under the then prevailing practice, the railroad companies, as a bonus for building the roads, received from the government certain grants of land paralleling the railroad. Before the roads were built some of these grant lands had been occupied by pioneers who had, in many cases, erected buildings and made other improvements. There were not a few such pioneers on lands which the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad claimed near Parsons, and we learned later that the railroad company was even then planning to evict them. Goodenow showed us these properties in particular and when we, sensing that all was not right, showed no interest, he sought to intrigue us by quoting prices that were certainly invitingly low. The settlers somehow learned of Goodenow's maneuvers and, after we had been in Parsons three days, a large crowd of menacing men gathered before our hotel. We realized that something was up, but did not know what. Presently one of them, a German from Pennsylvania, approached and asked, "Is Goodenow trying to sell you settled and improved lands?" We replied that we had been offered such, upon which he returned: "Then let me warn you that, if you buy these lands, you are in for trouble with the settlers who are determined to keep the lands they have, even if it means violence. If you buy these lands and try to occupy them, you will be shot." Upon that I calmed the spokesman, saying that we had no intention of buying the lands as they did not suit our purpose; and that, even if they did, we would certainly not contribute to others' losing the

[1]Krehbiel was summoned home from Parsons by a telegram reporting the serious illness of his eldest son, fourteen-year-old David, and after a trying journey he reached Summerfield shortly before his son's death of scarlet fever.

lands they had, for we were farmers ourselves and would side with our kind and not with the railroad company. That ended the episode.

First Land Purchase

Two brothers, Peter and Jacob Funk from Crimea, and their large families arrived in Summerfield about this time, and settled there temporarily as a place from which to seek a permanent home. A. E. Touselin of the Santa Fe learned of their presence. He knew from his associate, Herriot, that I was a Kansas booster, as was also Warkentin. He also knew that Cornelius Jansen (a Canada backer), ordered to leave Russia because of his promotion of emigration, was now in Canada. Touselin telegraphed me to come to Topeka at once at his expense. I did not know what he wanted and had neither the time nor the inclination to make the trip. However, Leisy urged me to go; and when the Funk brothers, learning of the invitation, offered to go with me, I accepted.

Having arrived in Topeka, Touselin tried to persuade me to join at railroad company expense the deputation then leaving Canada, and travel with its members through Nebraska and induce them to come to Kansas. That definitely did not appeal to me, and I told Touselin candidly that I had too much personal pride to attach myself to the deputees as an uninvited tail; and that, in any case, doing so would serve his ends much less effectively than selling to the Funk brothers some good lands at a low price. That would give him the first Mennonite settlers from Russia on his railroad lands. He got the point.

Thus it came about that my first inspection trip of Santa Fe-owned lands in Kansas was made in company with the Funks. That these men were well-to-do I knew and told Touselin so. But I did not know what money they were carrying with them. Before we set out westward, Touselin suggested to them that if they had unnecessary funds about them it would be wise to deposit them in a bank to avoid the risk of robbery. They, however, did nothing about it.

Our guide at the outset from Topeka was A. S. Johnson, reputed to be the first white child born in Kansas, son of a missionary to the Indians. We first went over the country about

Florence and Marion Center, Kansas. This was still practically all prairie land. From there we went westward beyond the present site of Moundridge. Then Johnson took us to Newton, and next to Halstead, both then small places. The Funks wanted to go from Halstead to Burrton. We looked for a conveyance, but could find nothing better than a shaky old wagon and a pair of skinny horses. Our driver went so slowly that Jacob Funk seized the reins and whip to show how one drives in Russia. But he quickly gave it up, fearing he would kill the poor beasts.

After we had viewed quite extensive areas in the central part of Kansas, the Funk brothers decided that they would buy lands near Marion Center, and we returned to Topeka to close the deal. The chief clerk in Touselin's office was a well-educated German from Dresden, a very dapper and friendly person, who served as interpreter. The two sections of land selected by the Funks were offered to them at $4.00 an acre. They counter-offered $2.50 an acre, a price that was probably lower than Touselin was empowered to accept. Now this first prospective sale to a Mennonite was of such importance to the Santa Fe Railroad Company that its president, W. B. Strong, had himself come to Topeka. He went to work on me, seeking to persuade me that the land in question was worth $4.00 an acre, which I did not dispute. Said he: "At $2.50 an acre we will buy all the land we can get in the neighborhood." In rejoinder I remarked that his company would do better to make the Funks a present of the two sections than to let the men go to Nebraska, Minnesota, or elsewhere and buy there; for wherever they settled, they were sure eventually to be joined by considerable numbers of other immigrants. That scored. The railroad officials went into a huddle. Then I found myself put to it to keep the Funks from raising their offer—they would rather have paid the $4.00 price than lose the lands. But in the end they got the property at $2.50 an acre, and this sale later fruited in big business for the Santa Fe Railroad Company.

When the Funks reached the stage of paying for the land they had purchased, it came out that between them they had carried $50,000 in cash on their land-hunting tour. Out of that they paid for the properties; but now they did deposit the balance in a bank. They would have been wiser to do so before

making the trip. They looked affluent, and I saw many a greedy glance cast at them during our journey in what was then still very definitely the frontier.

With this land purchase the die was cast for Kansas. Touselin now wished me to buy a section of land for myself at the same low price. When I told him I hadn't the means to buy, he offered to make a reservation for me. I accepted on the condition that I should be permitted to exchange it at the same price for an equal acreage in any region in which the Summerfield Mennonites might settle. He agreed, and I made a deposit of $50 then and there. I note here that later I surrendered this reserved section to Wilhelm Ewert.

On our return to Summerfield, the Funks and their families forthwith set out for Kansas, where they lived in a small house on one of the farms and put in their first winter, 1873-1874, making preparations for the future.

On July 24, 1873, Leonhard Sudermann, Jacob Buller, Wilhelm Ewert, and Andreas Schrag, members of the deputation, escorted by Jacob Y. Schantz of Canada, arrived in Summerfield from Elkhart, Indiana, for a short visit. Their presence drew many others, including railroad men, and there was a great stir and much coming and going. There were noted preachers among the visitors who, as the occasion offered, expounded the Word of God to the spiritual blessing and nourishment of their hearers. Much was said of conditions in Russia and of the land surveys in America. When I inquired whether the deputies now planned to see Kansas and Texas, Sudermann replied that they had completed their inspection tours. That was a painful bit of news for Warkentin; and, to soften it for him, I ventured the observation to Sudermann that, if the commission from their congregations was to find a place to settle that pleased the deputies, they had indeed ended their search; but if their commission was to find the best land available, they had not fully discharged their mandate, for they had not seen Kansas or Texas, and could accordingly not include them in their report.

My statement did not affect all hearers alike. Ewert declared, "Krehbiel is right; I am going to make the trip." Buller announced that he would go, too. Sudermann chose to go on

east, preaching here and there on the way, and Schrag and Schantz went with him. (It will be seen later that Sudermann settled in Kansas, near Newton, after all.)

The brethren Buller and Ewert, escorted by Warkentin, made a hurried trip to Kansas and Texas. On their return, Buller flatly declared that he would not choose Kansas as it was too warm; but he asked me why I favored that state. I replied that it was because in Kansas one required fewer clothes, less fuel, less winter fodder, and had a longer warm season in which to do the necessary farm work than farther north. That, I declared, appealed to me in preference to having to dig corn stalks and cattle feed out of snow. Buller did not contradict me, but he stuck to his views. Yet, man proposes and God disposes. Without any further intervention on my part, Buller and his vast congregation from Alexanderwohl, Russia, eventually did come to Kansas.

Summerfield Mennonites Move to Kansas

On my trip with the Funks I had noticed the good lands in the vicinity of Halstead, Kansas. My favorable impression of it was confirmed on a later journey, and also by other members of the Summerfield church who traveled in the West. Our recommendations prompted the congregation to appoint a delegation of members to examine the lands about Halstead more exactly and to enter into a provisional agreement for acquiring them. I do not recall the names of all the delegates appointed. Among them were Jacob Leisy, David Lehmann, David C. Ruth, Abraham Stauffer, and I. David Goerz, who then lived in Summerfield, decided to join us with his wife in order to visit her parents who had previously located near Marion Center, Kansas. The party left Summerfield by rail on October 8, 1873. It was joined en route by Warkentin, Flaming, and Johannes Fast, a teacher, and the party finally numbered twelve men. The railroad provided free transportation for us all. On arrival at Topeka, Touselin assigned a Kopper to act as conductor of our party.

He took us to Emporia by rail. First we covered the region for some distance to the south of it, and then that to the north of it as far as Council Grove. Then we shifted to Marion

Center and operated to the east and the west from there. Land agent Billings joined Kopper there, and these two provided horses and spring wagons in which we drove back and forth over the whole neighborhood.

As we were to be in Marion Center over Sunday, the Funks, who had located near there, invited us to hold religious services in their home. That was probably the first church service held by Mennonites in Kansas, and there I preached my first sermon in the state.

It was easy to see that the region about Marion Center abounded in good soil and had pleasing small streams and gentle hills and valleys. We were particularly pleased with the valley in which the Wiebe Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church is located today (1906).[2] Though our groups preferred to locate nearer a railroad line and I had in my own mind selected Halstead as the spot, I was strongly tempted to make a tentative reservation here for the Summerfield group. Fast, however, who had been commissioned by Wiebe's congregation in Russia to reserve suitable lands for that body, found it very hard to make a decision and appealed to me to do it for him. Waving our own interest in the tract, I recommended that he reserve it for his church body, which he did.

From Marion Center our company proceeded toward Halstead partly by rail and partly by wagon. We viewed the terrain in the vicinity of Peabody and Walton but did not like it. We went on to Newton, which was a main station of the railroad, where Muse and Captain John Spivey were added as guides to our party. First we drove west and northwest beyond the present position of Moundridge; then back to Newton and south of it for quite a distance. Next we explored Halstead and the surrounding country, both south and north along the Little Arkansas River and Turkey Creek to Mountain View. In that neighborhood we had to spend a night, which we did in the house of a pioneer who, to make room for us, went with his fifteen-year-old wife to a neighbor for the night. In the morning he went out early in the hope of shooting some game for our breakfast but failed, very likely because a cold storm came in out of the west.

[2]Later called Springfield Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church.

We were advised not to consider locating farther to the west; nevertheless, to show us that this was good counsel we were taken by rail to Great Bend and Larned. At Larned I dug three feet into the ground and found no change in the soil. I stated then that, if it rained as it does in St. Louis, I should certainly buy land there. We continued west to the Kansas boundary line (I am not sure whether on this or a later trip) to Granada, Colorado, which was then the end of the railroad line. The stations west of Larned were sod houses. The train conductor told me that on one of his earlier trips a buffalo herd numbering in the thousands had stormed across the track ahead of the train and there was nothing to do but wait for the herd to clear the road. On this trip I saw my first Indians from the train, riding along in single file some distance away. The soil in that western region was good, but covered with buffalo grass. The railroad land agents asserted that as cultivation extended westward there would be more rain in the region, which seems to have been proved correct; in the year in which I write this (1906) it rained more in western Kansas than in Halstead.

On returning to Topeka, we entered into preliminary negotiations with the Santa Fe for the purchase of extensive tracts, and Touselin agreed to reserve for us all railroad company lands in four townships. We arrived at home in Summerfield on October 26, 1873, in good health and grateful to God for His guidance.

Now followed a voluminous correspondence with the Santa Fe land office in Topeka. The burden of it fell on me. As I could not write English, C. B. Schmidt of the railroad land office in Topeka was assigned to carry on the correspondence, since he could write in German. The actual contracts were, of course, in English. As it was difficult to arrive at precise understandings through correspondence, all the more because I insisted that my fellow church members join in all decisions, and also because Touselin wanted to assure himself that we were competent to execute our end of any agreement, he himself came to Summerfield in December 1873 to close the deal. That took place in our small Summerfield church.

Under the contract entered into with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company, the railroad company agreed

to reserve for us exclusively for five years all unsold company-owned lands in Township 21 South, Range 2 West, McPherson County, and in Townships 22, 23, and 24 South, Range 2 West, in Harvey County, to secure for us a mill site with a dam, and with water rights extending seven miles upstream along the Little Arkansas River then owned by an Allbright; to advance the cost price of transportation for all persons and goods of our group; to have all trains make a stop at Halstead; and to sell us the lands at prices that I here explain. An appraisal price had been put by the railroad company on all lands it offered for sale. We obligated ourselves to buy and pay for a specified number of sections of land before the first of April 1874. We were to be given a 56 per cent discount from the company's book or appraisal price on all land taken up by April 1, whether paid for in full at the time of selection or taken under a firm contract fixing the date of final payment. The remainder of the lands, not taken up under the above conditions, were to be reserved for us for five years and to be available to any of our body at a 36 per cent discount from appraisal price, plus taxes and 10 per cent simple interest. None of the land was to be sold to any other than our company within five years without our written consent.

When we had reached a meeting of minds on these matters, the question arose as to who should sign the contract in our behalf, seeing that we were not a legally organized body. Touselin resolved the difficulty by proposing that the group designate me as its trustee, and that I sign in that capacity. This plan was adopted.

That let me in for much added work, much correspondence, and the necessity of making some difficult decisions. To protect ourselves, we had required the railroad company to provide us with township maps showing the exact appraisal price of each piece of land. I had authorized some persons who did not live in Summerfield to buy into the area reserved for us, which I had the power to do, only to discover that in such cases the appraisal price quoted the prospective buyer was higher than that shown by the charts. When I protested, the correct prices were accepted.

Halstead Settlement

Touselin placed a private car at the disposal of our party for a trip to Halstead to make our individual selections of land. About thirty men from the Summerfield and certain Iowa congregations made the journey to Kansas early in January 1874, again accompanied by a railroad representative. At Halstead the car was put on a sidetrack and served as our hotel during our entire stay.

Selecting a piece of land was not easy, not because of any great difference in the qualities of the soil, but because prices ranged from about $2.00 to $15 an acre, according to distance from towns or other factors that had impressed the appraisers. Land along creeks or even dry water courses was appraised high; some of the flat prairie land was appraised quite low.

That each person would want for himself what he considered the best land was at once evident, and, being leader of the group, I decided to make no selection for myself until everyone else had made his. One of the company had picked out two sections of land, but then wanted to give one up for another that he liked better, before all others had made their choice. This did not seem fair, and the privilege was denied him.

Much to the surprise of the railway men, the buyers passed by the higher priced tracts along creeks and water courses and chose higher lying pieces. Later experience showed that they had exercised good judgment.

The mill site, which was available to us under our contract, embraced 160 acres. Warkentin, who was a miller and planned to build a mill in Halstead, offered to buy the tract at its high price. However, to our embarrassment, Peter Wiebe announced that he wanted the property.[3] It was decided to cast lots, and

[3]The following passage relating to the above land-selection trip to Kansas is drawn from the autobiography of Susanna Krehbiel, wife of Christian Krehbiel: "I can say here with good conscience that Father did not take advantage of his position to make a single penny for himself and would not have accepted money if it had been offered. He often declared, 'No man shall ever be able to say that he has made Christian Krehbiel a rich man.' He would attain such status only by the labor of his own hands and the blessing of God. He followed this principle when anyone made him a gift as preacher, which rarely happened; he put it into a special fund to be used for charitable purposes."

in order to give Warkentin two chances I decided to participate. The lot fell in my favor, and I offered to transfer my right to the first person offering me $50. Warkentin made that offer at once, but I preferred another arrangement. I proposed that Warkentin take 80 acres, and that Wiebe take the other 80 acres. That was accepted, and the affair was amicably disposed of.

As noted, being leader of our company, I postponed my selection of a piece of land until everyone else had chosen. By that time all the land near Halstead was taken up except the east half of Section 1, Township 24. I had privately kept this whole section in view and now selected the half that was available as a piece that I could exchange for the parcel previously reserved for me in Marion County. Whether this exchange could be effected was a question.[4]

To make sure that I got a full section of land I had to go far north of Halstead to the country between Newton and McPherson. There I selected Section 27, at $4.00 per acre, in the expectation that a town would be established in the neighborhood. Indeed, when Christian Voran, Christian Hirschler, and my brother Daniel bought the sections adjoining mine, we jointly laid out a town site and named it Christian, Kansas. My brother opened a store, and we built a church on the corner of my land. However, when the Missouri Pacific Railroad later built its line from Newton to McPherson and, in spite of all our efforts, placed its station about a mile to the north at Moundridge, we dissolved the town of Christian. The Christian Mennonite church survived even though another congregation, known as West Zion, was founded at Moundridge.[5]

In 1874 Warkentin began building a mill at Halstead in partnership with an individual named Allbright. While Warkentin was away a good deal in connection with affairs relating to the immigrants arriving from Russia, he was treated badly by his partner, and things did not go well. Then he married the daughter of Conrad Eisenmeyer, an experienced miller, and he

[4]Krehbiel later also secured the west half of Section 1, just southeast of Halstead, where he lived the remainder of his life.

[5]In 1908 the Christian Mennonite Church was moved to the south end of Moundridge and is now called The First Mennonite Church of Christian.

and his father-in-law bought out Allbright and converted the mill into a steam plant. It was an immediate success, and Warkentin, who also owned two sections of land bought at colonist's prices, eventually became a rich man.

Peter Wiebe founded a lumber business in Halstead in 1874. In the fall of the same year John W. Ruth and Daniel Haury of Summerfield went to Halstead, built small houses, and began breaking the prairie on their farms north of town. Quite a few others from Summerfield also went to Halstead that same year.[6]

That fall, grasshoppers in dense swarms descended on Kansas and devoured everything that was green or soft. Christian Hirschler, who had his first stand of corn in the fields, tried to save something by cutting and shocking some of the corn; but

[6]From the autobiography of Susanna Krehbiel: "As I dreaded settling in Kansas on the raw, wild prairie so near to Indians, Father urged me to go with him on a trip he made in May 1874. I had to take Bernhard, then a baby, and as he proved to be a poor, car-sick traveler, it turned out to be a hard journey. We had to travel at night, but we could not afford a sleeper. At Topeka we had to lay over while Father worked on contracts with Touselin. We went on the next morning and, shortly after leaving Topeka, a porter came and took us to the private car of Touselin, whom we had had in our home in Summerfield. He and Father talked business, while I enjoyed the welcome conveniences until we reached Halstead that evening.

"In Halstead we met Peter Wiebe, who was building his house, and Warkentin, who with his partner Allbright, was building a mill. We all had to stay at the Sweezy Hotel which was packed with people, including a gang of laborers building a bridge over the river near the mill. Father got a team of horses and a farm wagon from Peter Wiebe and on Saturday we drove around over the prairie while Father made selections of lands for various persons who had commissioned him to do so. He had a map to work from and had to hunt up survey stakes to see just what tracts were still for sale. We had a picnic lunch on the prairie and at sundown arrived at the Rupps. They had a very small cabin to accommodate their colony of twelve persons. Yet they received Father, me, and baby Bernhard with cordial welcome. We spent Sunday there. On Monday we returned to Halstead. The sun and the hot winds gave Bernhard such a sunburn that his skin peeled. On Tuesday we went over the neighborhood southeast of Halstead while Father sought to pick out a quarter section of land for school purposes that was to be given free by the railroad company. That day we also had a good look at the tract Father had selected for us, the east half section of our present (1912) home. I didn't like it—it was too sandy; but it had been bought, and nothing could be done about it. After a ten-day trip we got back to Summerfield and what I had seen made it possible for me better to adjust myself to the future."

the grasshoppers ate even the shocks. The insects lay so thick on the railroad tracks that the engines slipped and stalled. Throughout that part of Kansas and as far as Tipton, Missouri, the pests left everything bare and black, as I saw when traveling there that fall. It was terrifying. And yet some good came of it. Great sympathy was awakened in the East for the pioneers who had not been there long enough to get on their feet, and train loads of supplies poured into Kansas to help the unfortunates. The Santa Fe, and probably all other railroads, hauled these supplies without charge.

It can well be imagined that we in Summerfield faced our ambitious plan of removing to Kansas with considerable misgiving when the first large body set out in the spring of 1875. My family did not go with this group, but I did.[7] How much greater the distances now seemed when we had to cover them in farm wagons instead of buggies drawn by fleet ponies. All illusions vanished; only courage and faith in God remained.

The founding of the Mennonite church in Halstead occurred in March 1875. It was the chief reason for my going to Kansas that spring, though on this trip I also went to Florence in behalf of the wretched company of immigrants stranded there. Of this, elsewhere.

It was important that the many members of my Summerfield

[7]Krehbiel, as stated, did not take his family to Kansas with the early groups leaving Summerfield. As he does not again refer to this subject, Edward B. Krehbiel, a son, quotes from his mother's autobiography to complete the story at this point; and, incidentally, to give a picture of what preparing for pioneering meant:

"The fall of 1878 meant much hard work for my sister Katie, who lived with us, and me. We were to move to Kansas in March 1879. There was no fruit in the land to which we were going. We had an abundance of it in Summerfield and the art of canning had just become known to us. We must then manage to put up as much as possible to take with us. Any of my children who had a part in this will not have forgotten it. Every evening after school the children had to pick apples or other fruits. During the week, a wagonful would accumulate that had to be put up in some form on Saturday. Some apples went into vinegar, some were dried, other canned in tin—glass containers were then not known—still others were made into apple butter. We ended up with sixteen barrels of vinegar, three sugar-barrels of dried apples, three hundred quarts of canned apples, and one hundred gallons of apple butter. The grape crop that fall was good, and we put up seven barrels of wine and also a lot of sweet pickles. All this planning and strenuous work I prefer to write no more about."

congregation who had gone to Halstead should not be without a church and religious services. So it was that, at my instigation and under my leadership, the Halstead Mennonite Church was organized on Easter Sunday, March 28, 1875, in the home of Jacob Dettweiler. My brother, Valentin Krehbiel, became minister; John Haury and Daniel Bachman, deacons. Religious services were held, Communion was observed, and the church regulations were formulated, adopted, and later translated into English by David Goerz. I had preached in a district schoolhouse in Halstead on an earlier trip, and that sermon is believed to have been the first to be delivered in Halstead. In any case, the Mennonite church was the first church in Halstead.

Helping the Immigrants

Already in 1873 smaller groups of Mennonites from Russia began to arrive in Summerfield and in Kansas, Nebraska, and Minnesota. To help the immigrants, an Aid Committee was formed in Pennsylvania, probably on the instigation of Cornelius Jansen. In order to do our part in giving practical help to the oncoming immigrants, we formed a committee in Summerfield called the Mennonite Board of Guardians. I was named chairman; Warkentin, president; and David Goerz, secretary of this board. (John F. Funk later became treasurer.)[8]

The Aid Committee established connections with the Red Star shipping lines whose headquarters were in Philadelphia. A certain Francis Funk of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company took the Aid Committee under his wing and steered all its immigration traffic via Red Star Line over our northern railroads.

Cornelius Jansen (who had close contacts with the Aid Committee and probably with Funk) had secured very favorable transportation and colonizing arrangements from the Canadian Government, and he sought similar conditions in Washington for Mennonite colonists who might come to the United States. He wanted Congress to set aside a large tract somewhere in the West as a closed area to be reserved for Mennonites only. He

[8]In H. P. Krehbiel's *History of the Mennonite General Conference,* Vol. I, p. 206, the organization is listed as follows: Christian Krehbiel, president; David Goerz, secretary; John F. Funk, treasurer; B. Warkentin, agent.

received some encouragement, too; but Carl Schurz, who was then United States Senator from Missouri, flatly told him that his plan would never be approved. Jansen complained bitterly of Schurz to me when he visited Summerfield soon after, but I told him that Schurz was the only man who had told him the naked truth while others were side-stepping the issue. Congress, I said, to make sure that frontier lands went to actual settlers and not to speculators, had passed extensive and well-considered legislation and was not likely to reopen or alter it to fit special interests such as Jansen represented.

The eastern and Canadian interests wanted us to serve them as handy men, helping to pay for the transportation of immigrants, which would have given the Red Star Line the profits from carrying passengers, but leaving to us alone the caring for the needy colonists after their arrival at their destination. We were prepared to co-operate with the Aid Committee on a fair basis. The steamship companies and the eastern railroads were chiefly interested in getting the immigrants as passengers; the western railroad lines had that interest, too, but also a more important one: getting buyers for their lands and colonists who would develop the country they served and feed the railroad.[9]

[9]Working out these arrangements brought agents of various steamship and railroad companies to Summerfield, and we had to put them up in our home. [Edward Krehbiel inserts here a pertinent passage from Susanna Krehbiel's autobiography. She wrote that many persons from Europe, coming in advance of the main body of immigrants, stopped in Summerfield to seek information or advice, and often were house guests. She continues as follows:]

"It was much less difficult for me to have these guests than it was to accommodate the big men from the steamship or railroad companies, who came in the interest of their concerns and whom we usually had to quarter in our modest home. As we had only a dining room and kitchen on the ground floor, they had to sit in the dining room, where our baby lay in its crib, and through which we had to go back and forth to reach the cellar or get meals. If they could not stay in the open for the night, we put them up in the hired hands' room next to the kitchen. For me and my sister Katie, who lived with us, these were trying experiences, for we did not, as today, have canned goods and few supplies were to be had in Summerfield; and even had there been, there was no telephone or delivery. We couldn't bother Father with our troubles, for he himself was a plagued and driven man. If he was not in conference with someone or traveling, he was busy almost day and night with correspondence, struggling to make the needs of the immigrants known and to raise means to help them to new homes."

For these reasons there was keener competition between the western roads which we could and did exploit for the benefit of our co-religionists. In this, Touselin and C. B. Schmidt were very helpful to us. The former had contacts and influence with the eastern railroads, and the latter, a German, got along well with the German steamship companies.

The Red Star Line was not so well equipped to handle immigrant traffic as some other steamship companies and accordingly our Board of Guardians, through the mediation of C. B. Schmidt of the Santa Fe Railroad, tied up with the Inman Line and made arrangements with them for through transportation from Europe to Kansas and other western states.

A representative of the Inman Line,[10] Falk, handed Goerz a closely printed draft of a contract which would have committed the Board of Guardians to apply any funds it collected to the payment of transportation charges before meeting any other obligations. This ran directly counter to our prime objective, which was to give priority to helping immigrants to acquire lands on which to settle, and to furnish them the farm equipment needed to get started. After much discussion I took the document—I still have it—read it carefully word for word, and at last told Falk I would sign the contract if he would strike out one single word from the text. He remarked: "Krehbiel, you'd make a good steamship company manager." He struck out the word, and the contract, which in other respects was very favorable, was executed.[11]

Falk now wanted to give this contract publicity and suggested the issuance of a regular leaflet. This led to the decision to publish *Zur Heimat*, with David Goerz as editor and John F. Funk of Elkhart, who had become a member of the Board of Guardians, as printer. If I am right, Funk was to be paid $1,000 for

[10]The town of Inman, Kansas, was named after the Inman Line by the people who came over on it.

[11]The phrase in question reads as follows: "The Mennonite Board of Guardians . . . will also keep on deposit with the said Steam Ship Company in New York City a sufficient sum of money to provide for forwarding under this Agreement all persons who shall *unexpectedly* apply *to* their Agent in Hamburg for passage to New York or to any point in America whether provided herein or not." The word *unexpectedly* was dropped. The word *to* was also stricken out and replaced with the word *through*.

printing and mailing, and Goerz was to receive $300, or possibly $500, for his work. As Goerz had the most work to do, his compensation was subsequently increased. Falk subscribed for several thousand copies to help cover the costs.

Someone may think that this arrangement was not quite aboveboard. But that is not true when one considers that the railroad companies always spend large sums to advertise their business and that they could, at that time, hardly have found a more promising venture than to win the favor of the large bodies of immigrants who were coming to America for their own reasons. At the same time this publication proved to be the means of giving the later immigrants needed and useful information of all kinds.

The Board of Guardians met with the Aid Committee in Philadelphia on November 29, 1875, the former represented by John F. Funk, D. Goerz, H. Richert, and me; the latter by Amos Herr, Baer, Schneck, and Francis Funk, agent of the Red Star Line and the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. The eastern brethren favored transporting the immigrants over the Red Star Line, and it was to promote this idea that the meeting was arranged. In the discussion it appeared that the easterners were a bit distrustful of us. So, for example, Herr asked what personal benefits we expected from our dealings with the Inman Line, and why we were unwilling to use the Red Star Line. I calmly replied that I received no personal benefit; I merely spent my time and money for the cause. They had perhaps learned of the publication *Zur Heimat* and the generous subscription to it by the Inman Line, from which, to be sure, the printer and the editor derived some income, but I received nothing, though I had often to entertain transportation agents and board members, sometimes for days.

Francis Funk put himself out to be most agreeable and took us aboard the ship *Vaderland* where we were served an excellent meal. The outcome of our meeting was the establishment of the best possible co-operation between our two organizations and the presentation to us by Funk of passes on the Pennsylvania rail system for such use as we could make of them.

From Philadelphia Goerz, Warkentin, and I went to New York, where we called at the offices of the Inman Line. Nicker-

son and Abbott of the management received us very cordially, promised to continue the subscription to *Zur Heimat,* and issued passes to us. That did not please Francis Funk of the Red Star Line, but it suited us until Falk of the Inman Line discovered that we had arranged for amicable relations with the Aid Committee and in a huff canceled his company's subscription to *Zur Heimat.*

Our arrangements and their systematic application had a great influence on the course taken by the immigration of Mennonites from Europe. Large sums of money were collected and administered by the Board of Guardians, probably much larger than those of any other aid association; the most favorable transportation rates and treatment of immigrants were secured; the benefits of our contract, though intended primarily for our protegés, were extended to immigrants who could pay their own way; and we went so far as to extend our services and care to immigrants from the moment they crossed the Russian border. Goerz, as secretary of the board, carried on a huge correspondence; Warkentin was constantly traveling between the East and West in the interest of immigrants, sometimes acting as escort of parties; and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, whose generosity deserves to be recorded, in its own interests to be sure, gave us the almost continuous service of C. B. Schmidt as emissary, adviser, and escort, traveling extensively in this country and going even to Germany and Russia in our behalf.

No other aid association was able to match the advantages which the Board of Guardians could offer, and it is easy to understand why, with the exception of the earlier immigrants in 1873 and the Bergthal group that went to Canada, the later main stream of Mennonite immigration from Europe was almost wholly supervised and managed by this board.

Beginning of Settlements

The mass immigration of Mennonites from Europe occurred in 1874. The immigrants from the large Alexanderwohl congregation in Russia divided themselves into two groups which made separate journeys to America in both instances under our contract. Elder Jacob Buller headed the first contingent. He had Minnesota or Nebraska as his goal, and it was to Nebraska

that he led his flock. They were not received there as he had expected, and he lost no time in accepting the excellent proposition for settling in Kansas, which was dispatched to him by Touselin and C. B. Schmidt of the Santa Fe. His large group selected the terrain about twenty miles northeast of Newton, and he founded the New Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church there. What they paid for land I do not recall, but it must have come to very little, considering the large amount of lumber and building materials given them by the Santa Fe, including the so-called "Immigrant House," which was later used as a church.

The second contingent, under the leadership of Dietrich Gaeddert, also came in 1874. Our board was notified of their leaving Russia, and we expected them to come via Chicago. However, the Grand Trunk Railroad had upset all prior forwarding arrangements by its competitive bidding for immigrant traffic, and a new agreement was made to distribute the traffic equally among the competing lines. Under the new plan Gaeddert's company was conveyed over the Erie Railroad to Cincinnati, and from there via the Ohio-Mississippi Line to St. Louis. All of this information, including the time the travelers were to pass through Summerfield, was telegraphed to me from New York. It was harvest time and much fruit was ripe. The Summerfield Mennonites met the train and during its short stop streamed through the cars, passing out great quantities of food and fruit to the amazed and delighted tourists.

Several of us went with the party to St. Louis to act as interpreters. The company was to change trains there. On this occasion I had excellent opportunity to watch Gaeddert and note his capacity for leadership. In the midst of all the excitement and confusion and inconsiderate behavior of some members of the party, he saw everything, issued his orders in few and calm words, and left his post only when the entire company had entrained on the Missouri Pacific, one of our contract carriers. My brother-in-law, D. C. Ruth, accompanied the travelers to Kansas City where another change of trains was to be made. At some station on the way one of the passengers made a small purchase and left his purse with $400—probably everything he owned—on the counter; and in spite of Ruth's efforts, it was not recovered.

When Gaeddert and his flock reached Topeka, they were quartered, I believe, in the railroad shops of the Santa Fe, while Gaeddert himself and some of his leading men made a land-hunting journey. It had been assumed that this second contingent would join the Alexanderwohl group near Goessel. But some of the brethren came quietly to the conclusion that this was not the best course to follow, and they selected lands about twenty-five miles to the west of the first group. There they founded the Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church with Gaeddert as their elder.

In this vicinity there were open tracts of considerable size which were taken up by co-religionists who were not members of Gaeddert's congregation. Among these were the Mennonite Brethren under the leadership of A. Schellenberg.

In 1874 there was also founded the Hoffnungsfeld Mennonite Church, consisting of Swiss-Volhynian Mennonites who came from Russian Poland under the contract of the Board of Guardians. Jacob Stucky was their elder. As some of the land reserved by the Santa Fe for members of the Summerfield church had not been taken up, I secured Touselin's permission to offer it to the Swiss Volhynians. This led to the establishment of the Hoffnungsfeld community between our lands near Halstead and Gaeddert's farther north. This congregation eventually split into the Hoffnungsfeld and Eden churches. But before the break came, Brother Gaeddert and I had many trying experiences in seeking to maintain unity.

Some of the needy members of this group had remained in eastern states where they could earn a livelihood among Mennonites residing there. A number of them working at Trenton, Ohio, decided to go west to Hoffnungsfeld and asked whether I could secure cheap transportation for them. Ford, general manager of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, had given me a bunch of tickets with the authority to hand them out free or for any price I might set, which, of course, I had to turn in to his company. I supplied the needed number of tickets from Cincinnati to Halstead at a nominal figure. I record this episode to illustrate that the Board of Guardians saved the immigrants a great deal of money.

A considerable number of these Swiss-Volhynian Mennonites

from Russian Poland went to South Dakota. They had hard going in their first years and were repeatedly aided by supplies sent from Kansas. Some of them gave up the struggle and, joining with members of the Hoffnungsfeld community, founded a settlement near Pretty Prairie, Kansas. All of them, including those remaining in South Dakota, eventually made out very well.

Because Hoffnungsfeld was near Christian there was some shifting back and forth of members of these churches, and the church at Christian presently embraced many Swiss-Volhynian Mennonites, who originally hailed from Switzerland, among them some Krehbiels whose ancestry, like mine, traces back to the Pfrimmerhof in the Palatinate.

The Bruderthal congregation was likewise founded in 1874 under the leadership of Wilhelm Ewert. This man was very well to do and generous. He and his family arrived in Summerfield in 1874, accompanied by a number of Mennonite families from Poland whose expenses he had probably paid. He picked a farm for himself near Hillsboro, Kansas, and proposed to buy 80 acres of land for each of the needy families he had brought with him and make them a present of it. I advised him against it, believing that his generosity would not long be appreciated. I suggested he would do better to retain title to the land and rent it on very reasonable terms to his protegés who would make out on this plan just as well as on his. He took this advice, which subsequent events proved sound when many of them joined neighboring churches.

The Gnadenau Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church was founded in 1874 southwest of Hillsboro on the terrain that I had recommended to Johannes Fast some time before, and which he had reserved for them. Their elder was Jacob Wiebe.

Aiding the Poor

The Canton community was founded in 1875, following tragic experiences which I shall try to relate. The members of this group came from Volhynia, a Polish section in Russia, and were nearly all very poor and uneducated. (The Board of Guardians had no advance notice of their coming.) The Aid Committee of Pennsylvania paid their travel expenses from Europe, and

Francis Funk arranged for them to use his favored transportation lines on the sea and his preferred railroads in the east. He was, however, shrewd enough to pass the immigrants over to C. B. Schmidt of the Santa Fe for the last leg of the trip to Kansas. This huge company of immigrants, consisting of one hundred families with many children,[12] was dumped by the Santa Fe in Florence, Kansas, with only a store building for shelter in the middle of January 1875; and the care of this large wretched group was put up to the Board of Guardians.

Warkentin was notified by C. B. Schmidt of the arrival of this multitude and hurried to Florence. What he found led him to telegraph to Summerfield at once: "One hundred families without food; send money and man to help." That was like a bolt out of the blue. As Francis Funk had used his favorite transportation companies without any reference to our board, these immigrants were truly a responsibility of the Aid Committee of the East. The Board of Guardians was not willing to drain its treasury, built up to carry out its own obligations, to meet this unforeseen though very real need. We realized that, if we lacked funds to assume the travel costs of needy future oncomers, Funk would exploit the board's weakness to transport new immigrants over the lines he was working for.

Now since Schmidt as agent of the Santa Fe had, without consulting us, accepted this company of immigrants, Goerz and I held that the Santa Fe must, for the present, supply them with food and shelter. Therefore, we did not at first dip into the board's funds, but we raised a substantial collection in Summerfield which Goerz and several others took to Kansas for distribution and to make an on-the-spot examination of the position of the poor souls in their midwinter tragedy.

Meantime, I wrote to Brother Baer—I forget his first name—in Pennsylvania, strongly insisting that the Aid Committee owed it to these unfortunates to send the means to keep them from starving and freezing; adding that if they were not willing to do that, they should have kept these immigrants in the East where they could have earned a living, as we in Summerfield did with needy arrivals. My correspondence with the Aid Committee did

[12]Susanna Krehbiel's autobiography sets the number at 700.

in the end have the desired result, and soon funds began to arrive from Pennsylvania.

In *Zur Heimat* Goerz depicted the plight of the people stranded in Florence. Collections were taken up everywhere in our churches, and we were able to meet the most crying needs of the unfortunates without weakening the board's treasury.

It was not enough to supply these people with food. A chance for the young people, of whom there were many, to earn something was needed at once. To that end I found work for twenty-four young folks in Summerfield and sent my brother-in-law, D. C. Ruth, to Florence to bring them to us at my expense. They were, to be sure, to repay me later and, parenthetically, most of them did. These persons were in such straits that we even had to supply them with clothing. Among them were Peter and Eva Bartel, and the Koehns who took service in my home. Once these people began to get wages, they felt they must first help their needy relatives in Florence, and the repayment of my advances was thereby postponed. The example set by Summerfield was followed by other communities and served not only to meet a pressing need, but also to teach the young newcomers American ways and conditions.

Steps to get these helpless immigrants onto the land and able to help themselves were of the first importance. During the winter I drew up the following plans, discussed them with my associates and, when the time was ripe, made them public.

Plan 1. The railroad company is to allot to each family so desiring 40 acres of land and is to make no demand for payment for at least five years. Financial aid to families taking up 40 acres under this plan is to be given by the aid associations either in the form of outright gifts or of loans where conditions warrant.

Plan 2. Any of the Summerfield group or other person who has bought land in Kansas but has not yet occupied it, shall, if he can afford it, build a house on his land, take in one of the stranded families as tenants, supply the needed implements, cows, and draft animals against a note, pay his tenant $3.00 an acre for breaking the prairie, furnish seed for the first planting, permit the tenant to retain the entire first crop, and thereafter receive rent.

Plan 3. Anyone who already lives on his land or who plans to move onto it this spring (1875) shall, in addition to his own house, build another on his property for one of the needy families, supply it with foodstuffs which the family itself is to prepare for use, and in return this family shall work for him at an appropriate wage.

As its contribution to the execution of this program, the railroad company is to lay down, freight prepaid in Halstead, one carload of building lumber for each family that is located under any one of these three plans. The benefit of this prepaid freight is to go to such families as settle on 40 acres under Plan 1; and to the owners of the land who take tenants under Plans 2 and 3, as an inducement to take the risks involved.

Raising money to finance this program, especially Plan 1, was a headache. It was proposed that all branches of Mennonites in America be informed of the plight of their stranded coreligionists and urged to come to their aid, either with outright donations or with loans of money. The funds contributed were to be administered by a special body—the Kansas Aid Committee—representing both the Aid Committee and the Board of Guardians. This program met with general approval and was adopted.

To carry out this program it was necessary to win the agreement of the railroad company. I had submitted the plan in writing to Touselin but did not get his acceptance. On my way to Halstead in March 1875 I stopped in Topeka to see Touselin and had quite a battle to win his acceptance of our program. He was, of course, glad to welcome settlers if they colonized a new region and was ready to agree to our program if the 40-acre allotments were made in the country about Pawnee Rock, Kansas. But after I pointed out that this was definitely frontier country, where the needy settlers could find no outside employment whatever to help themselves along, he finally agreed to my plan, which called for taking the 40-acre tracts in the vicinity of Canton, McPherson County. He also agreed to keep the matter confidential until I could secure the acceptance of the program by the people in Florence.

With these objectives attained, I hopefully proceeded via Halstead, where, as noted, I organized the Mennonite church, to

Florence to see these immigrant families from Volhynia and present our program for release from their distress.

Based on reports I had heard, I pictured the situation of these unfortunates as being frightful enough; but what I found was ten times as bad as I had imagined. The only indoor quarters of this multitude of about one hundred families with children was a store about 80 by 30. It was a veritable pesthole. The doors and the few windows in the gables were kept closed, the center aisle was crowded with persons of all ages. Standing about, on either side of this center aisle lay sick and exhausted men, women, and children on straw sacks midst cooking and eating utensils. No fresh air! for, like most Europeans, they thought fresh air harmful. You can picture the conditions in this drafty hall, packed with human creatures, many of them sick, without proper ventilation in a pest-laden air charged with coal gas, meager food, little soap or water, no facilities for bodily cleanliness, no privacy—a terrible scene! It was fortunate that lack of space inside made it necessary that cooking and washing be done out of doors at the back of the store.

Though catering to the physical needs of these unfortunates was of the first importance, it was believed that serving their spiritual hunger would give them courage; accordingly, we held a church service at which I preached. We could not expect these people in their wretchedness to sing, so several preachers who were there led the singing, a gift I lack. The singing drew all who could get in, and attracted a group of Americans as onlookers. While preaching my lungs became so filled with noxious gases that I opened a door. Someone immediately shut it. I stopped, opened the door again, saying, "We must have fresh air if I am to speak and you are not all to perish in this foul haze." One of the invalids lifted himself from his straw pallet and called, "Thank you, dear brother, for once I get some fresh air." But even so the fresh air did not reach the middle of the room.

After the divine services the settlement program was presented to the gathering and was greeted with great enthusiasm. Anything to get out of this hole! was the sentiment. With their acceptance, we were in a position to put the program into effect.

The cultural status of this group was much lower than that

of other Mennonite immigrants. After the meeting broke up, parents and relatives crowded about me to inquire about those of their young people who had gone into service in Summerfield and elsewhere.

The first steps in the execution of the settlement plans for these people were taken by various persons who had previously taken up land in Kansas and who now built houses on them for tenants under either the rent plan (Plan 2) or the hired-hand plan (Plan 3).

A young couple, Peter and Eva Bartel, were among those who had come from Florence to Summerfield and were employed in my home. As they were willing and able workers, I built a house for them on my land in McPherson County, section 27, and furnished them with horses, wagon, and other necessary equipment on credit. They were thus among the first to go to Kansas under the settlement program, and they served as a model for others. They lived on my land for five years and then went on their own.

To advance matters I soon went to Kansas again (1875) accompanied by Christian Hirschler. With the help of the people who were to occupy them, we hastily brought about the erection of a number of 12-by-14-foot houses and let the families move into them. These little houses were, to be sure, thin-walled and very drafty; but they were infinitely superior to the den in Florence where many had to remain until the board could complete the arrangements to settle them on the 40-acre farms near Canton, McPherson County, which had been selected for them.

Kansas Aid Committee

The projected Kansas Aid Committee was organized and included among others Christian Hirschler, David Holdeman, and David Goerz who was treasurer. Funds were supplied by the Aid Committee and the Board of Guardians. As much of the money contributed to these two committees was in the form of repayable loans, and as moneys were in turn advanced by the joint committee to settlers in the form of loans, Goerz had a colossal job in keeping track of these numerous transactions and

later effecting collections from the scattered settlers and repayment to the original lenders.

In addition to financing, the work of the Kansas Aid Committee included providing building materials, regulating the free-freight arrangements so that each settler on 40 acres and others eligible received their proper share of lumber, supervising the construction of houses, and supplying the needed equipment and draft animals. We had to buy mostly unbroken Texas oxen because few broken-in ones were to be had and were too high-priced, anyway. The colonists, most of which had been weavers in Europe, had a lot of amusing experiences in making these animals tractable.

The backward status of these immigrants has been noted. Their progress was hampered by the fact that their leader, Tobias Unruh, left them and settled in a northern state.[13] Thus the new community in Canton, which harbored enough suspicion and distrust in this new country as it was, became leaderless, restless, and unsettled. The aid committees had to supply not only material goods but also spiritual guidance. Neighboring preachers, I among them, stepped into the breach, organized the Canton Mennonite Church, and took turns in filling the Sunday pulpit.

But this did not provide the steady leadership needed in order to pull this group together and to build strong sound church life. And their lay ministers, well-meaning though they were, were ill-prepared to cope with inner dissensions which arose among them.

A serious dissension arose somewhat later as a result of the work of John Holdeman from near Wadsworth, Ohio, a self-proclaimed minister but not acknowledged as such by his home church or by the (Old) Mennonites to which he belonged. Holdeman had been critical of his own Mennonite group and in the process had severed his connections with the (Old) Mennonites in order to organize a true Church of God. In line with this he advocated a complete break of fellowship with other

[13]Elder Tobias Unruh arrived in Philadelphia January 28, 1875, with the last transport of immigrants. After wintering in the east he settled in Turner County, South Dakota, where he died July 24, 1875. (Cf. *Mennonite Encyclopedia.*)

Mennonite churches whom he characterized as worldly, but he did not hesitate to preach in their churches and to proselyte members among them.

Entrance into the Canton church he gained partly through his brother, David Holdeman, a member of the Kansas Mennonite Aid Committee. Although John Holdeman's preaching was as a whole sound, he, nevertheless, produced much confusion in the congregation by his stress on his own view of Christian simplicity by characterizing other Mennonites as proud and worldly and by exalting his own followers as true children of God. The Mennonite benefactors who had helped these Canton immigrants in their trek from Russia and who had helped them to a home and a new start in Kansas he also criticized as worldly. To give but one illustration, he berated the generosity of Jacob Leisy who had for an indefinite period loaned $1,000 to the settler's fund in order to help provide each one with a 40-acre plot, who had also furnished housing, wagons, and cattle, and had paid out $3.00 per acre to break sod for them. He stated that Leisy should have given this as a donation to the settlers. Similar accusations were leveled at others.

The work of John Holdeman precipitated a serious split in the Canton church and left in its wake sharp tensions. A good school, offering both German and English, was allowed to disintegrate because a school was regarded by followers of Holdeman as dangerous and harmful. To prevent further deterioration and disintegration, especially among the young, the Kansas Conference appointed John Ratzlaff as elder. Under his leadership the congregation again began to prosper until Ratzlaff for financial reasons moved to Meno, Oklahoma, and was followed by a good portion of the congregation.

A substantial number of those who remained at Canton organized and established the Church of God in Christ (Mennonite). It is well to add here that the poverty and the hard struggle to make a living, no doubt, contributed to the unrest and dissensions in this church. Forty acres per family simply was not enough to earn a living. Consequently, many farmers sold their small plots to others and sought other places where the economic outlook appeared better.

Prussian Immigrants

Several Mennonite communities were founded in Newton and vicinity by immigrants coming directly from Prussia, and by other Prussian Mennonites who came to America via Russia, where they had gone many years before. Among these I mention the families of Leonhard, Abraham, and Herman Sudermann, and of Abraham Quiring and Rudolf Riesen. Leonhard Sudermann, as previously noted, was elder of the congregation in Berdyansk, Russia, and had been a member of the deputation in 1873. These families arrived in Summerfield in 1876 and spent the winter there. Several of them were ministers and during their stay preached the gospel to the spiritual blessing of the Summerfield congregation and of their fellow believers who were constantly passing through on their way from Europe to their new homes in America.

In the spring of 1877 the Sudermanns and Quirings moved to Kansas, and some of them founded homes near Newton, others near Brainerd and Whitewater, Butler County. The first Newton Mennonite congregation was organized with Leonhard Sudermann as elder. Later, when Jacob Toews, coming from Khiva, was chosen as elder in Newton, Sudermann became the elder of the Emmaus Mennonite Church in Butler County. Further considerable accretions of members, coming from West Prussia and settling about Newton, Emmaus, and Elbing, led to the formation of the Zion Mennonite Church at Elbing, in Butler County, with Cornelius and J. W. Regier as ministers.

The Gnadenberg congregation, also near Elbing, was made up of Mennonites from Poland led by Johann Schroeder and later by Gerhard N. Harms.

Some time after the earlier and main migrations from Europe John Mueller came with a following of Mennonites from Galicia, Austria, whose ancestors had gone there from the Rhenish Palatinate and were thus descendants of the South German Mennonites originally hailing from Switzerland. These arrivals were poor and had to go to work for hire in Harvey and McPherson counties to earn the means to buy lands. Eventually they settled near Hanston, Hodgeman County, Kansas. That region was for that time rather far to the west and proved to lack rain. It was years before these colonists prospered

enough to buy their lands, and some became discouraged and went elsewhere. This small congregation had no minister of its own and had to be served by visiting ministers. Gaeddert and my brother Valentin often served; and I was called on to fill the pulpit frequently for several years.

The congregation at Beatrice, Nebraska, like that at Newton, was composed of Mennonites largely from Prussia, who objected to serving in the army and were prompted by the wave of immigration from Russia to follow the example of their fellow believers and seek new homes in America. The Beatrice community consisted of well-educated people and flourished under the able leadership of its elder, G. Penner.

The stream of Mennonite immigration from Europe in the seventies did not limit itself to Kansas and Nebraska. Many larger and smaller groups settled in Minnesota, South Dakota, and Manitoba, and have since been constantly re-enforced by later immigrants from Europe and Asia.

The wide dispersal of Mennonite immigrants from Europe into various American states and Canada was a good thing. It was to be expected that they would rapidly multiply and, had they all settled in one colony, they could not have expanded as they have. Also, had they all been established in one region their religious activities would have exercised less influence. Living to themselves in a closed community, they would have had fewer contacts with the outside world, their own horizons would have been narrower, and in consequence their influence on outsiders would have been less. In turn, the outside world with its manifold superiorities and advantages in certain respects might have exercised a repressive effect on them not possible in their dispersion. And schools for advanced education and the missionary spirit and activity would hardly have found the interest and support that they have enjoyed.

7

Tragedy and Hope in the Indian Territory

THE AGRICULTURAL ABILITY and the business enterprise of the Mennonites brought them prosperity in their new home land. Lest this good fortune lead them away from the true source of help, the fathers spared no effort in building churches and denominational schools. Since through a union of churches much more could be accomplished, the General Conference Mennonite Church was organized. In this union the members learned to know, respect, and love one another. The fruits of this endeavor are seen today in five district conferences, six schools of higher learning, several church papers, and in the missionary program in Oklahoma, Arizona, Montana, and India.[1]

The Mennonites differentiated between home and foreign missions in an unusual manner. Home missions embraced work among scattered Mennonites; foreign missions began with Indians in this country. Home missions, or circuit riding, was carried on from the very beginnings of the General Conference.[2]

[1]At the date of publication, six regional conferences comprise the General Conference. Conference-related schools are Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Bethel College, Bluffton College, Freeman Junior College, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Rosthern Junior College, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, and United Mennonite Educational Institute. Missions are carried on in Africa, Formosa, India, Japan, Mexico, and South America as well as in Canada and the United States.

[2]For example, the Christian church was organized from members of the Halstead church, on grounds of driving distance; later, the Garden Township Church came from both of these, as did also the West Zion Church in Moundridge. Out of all four a fifth one was organized at Geary, Oklahoma, a sixth [Friedensau] east of Perry, Oklahoma, and a seventh [Zion] west of Perry from members who had moved to Oklahoma.

At first the object was to invite established churches to join the new organization. Today, for example, the Western District Conference works with the dispersed members in western Kansas and Oklahoma. The same conditions exist in California, Oregon, the Dakotas, Canada, Washington, and Nebraska. Unfortunately, out of this dispersion several small divisions arose, each calling for assistance from its own group and causing much duplication of effort when one person might well have served the scattered groups. Furthermore, many, instead of winning others to the church, were themselves easy prey to various proselyting churches of the new community. The language, too, was a barrier, the older ministers often speaking only German, the younger people only English. What a power for evangelization the Mennonites could be in this dispersion if only they would hold true to the faith of their fathers!

Missions Among the Indians

Let us now turn to the field of foreign missions. The General Conference from the start planned to develop in this direction. The churches of the Palatinate in my childhood had held a monthly Sunday collection for missions, either for the Dutch Mennonite Mission Society or the Barmen Mission Society.[3] It was natural that their emigrated members here should retain that enthusiasm for foreign mission work. The South German churches collected money for the Dutch Mennonite Mission in Sumatra. Gradually the idea was born that we could establish our own missions. With the enthusiasm that actuates new organizations, the Conference members conceived as their goal the unification of all Mennonites on the North American continent. With that goal great plans could be conceived.[4]

At the conference in Wadsworth in 1872, it was decided to elect a missions board, consisting of five members, including the Conference officers. The election resulted in Christian Krehbiel, president of the board; C. J. van der Smissen, secretary;

[3]Pastor Reder of the Weierhof had delightful mission hours at which time he read accounts from the mission fields.

[4]Brother Jacob Leisy at the General Conference meeting in 1866 at Wadsworth gave the impetus to foreign missions when he offered to pay $1,000 whenever the Conference opened its first independent mission field.

A. B. Shelly; J. H. Oberholtzer, president of the Conference; Christian Schowalter, secretary; and D. Krehbiel, treasurer.

The first decision of the board was to accept S. S. Haury as mission student and send him to study in Barmen, Germany, with expenses for travel and school paid by the General Conference. After three years in Germany, Haury returned in 1875 in time for the conference in Pennsylvania.[5] He preached several times during the session and was favorably received. This conference re-elected the missions board and commissioned it to find a mission field wherever the Lord would direct. It was not until March 27, 1877, that a proposal to open a mission in the Indian Territory was made.

S. S. Haury, wishing to make this interim worthwhile for his calling, elected to attend a medical school in Philadelphia. After his return, on the suggestion of the Conference, he had spent some time visiting many of the churches, winning support for mission work through his practical and earnest approach. Just how long he remained in medical school I do not remember, but I know I was impressed with the extent of his medical knowledge when I visited the field, and by the resulting attitude of the Indians who looked upon him as a father and listened to his preaching more eagerly.

In October 1876, Haury and his brother Peter went to the Indian Territory.[6] Their journey of some seventeen days convinced them that the field was open for mission work. But the board wished to study the larger field of missions before coming to a decision.

Haury and J. B. Baehr thereupon undertook the long and venturesome journey to Alaska, newly purchased from Russia. I had read articles on the need for missionaries there and, feeling that this might be a hint from the Lord, had broached the matter to the board. The men arrived in Sitka on March 10, 1879, and found an opportunity in an abandoned Presbyterian school to hold classes for the Indians during that winter. After the close of school they traveled farther north, but opportunities seemed less suitable. On October 10 of 1879 they returned to

[5]This conference met in West Swamp Church near Quakertown, Pennsylvania.

[6]Now the State of Oklahoma.

Halstead. Haury went on the principle that we should not intrude on another church's domain. The board empowered him to inquire whether the Presbyterians would turn the Sitka territory over to us. They declined to do so. The Conference then in session in Summerfield charged the board to look for another field.[7]

The board met in Summerfield in November 1879. Here definite plans were made for opening a mission to the Arapaho Indians in the Indian Territory.

Visiting the Mission Field

On March 7, 1880, a committee of four made an exploratory trip to the Indian Territory, remaining until April. S. S. Haury, H. Richert, D. Goerz, and Christian Krehbiel made up the group. We went by train to Wellington, Kansas. Here we engaged a wagon with four horses and a driver (cost $13 and driver's expenses) for the rest of the journey. Caldwell was our first stop, arriving there at noon. A company of soldiers was stationed at the border to keep illegal entries out of the territory. Haury thought it wise to notify the captain of our plans. At the end of a two-mile walk we came to the encampment where Haury gave his letter of recommendation from Carl Schurz to the captain. The captain was so impressed that he ordered his company to parade for us, and when we left, insisted on sending us back to town in the company ambulance. "Oh, no," he replied in response to our protest, "I won't let the gentlemen walk." This was, of course, much better than hiking, and it showed that in America also letters of recommendation from people in authority ease the way for the traveler.

Our next destination was Darlington. The first stop was at Stage Ranch, now Kingfisher. It consisted of a small house and a shed for stagecoach horses, with an elderly man as caretaker. When we came to the house, Haury called out, "Can we stay all night?" "Plenty of room on the prairie," the old man answered. He did permit us to sleep near his haystack and promised us shelter in the house in case of rain. Later I looked

[7]There was no Conference session in 1879. This, no doubt, refers to the sessions of the missions board.

him up in his shack, and he regaled me with stories. He had been a cowboy and ranger all his life. That accounted for his brusqueness. He told how one night Indians had awakened him, demanding he throw all his provisions out of the window. "Of course I did," he said, "or they would have killed me." The next day he told the police, who got all his stuff back and put the redskins into jail. That was not a propitious outlook for our trip, but we arrived undisturbed at Darlington the next day.

Here we put up our horses in a livery stable owned by a Seger. He also owned the ramshackle hotel, built with cottonwood boarding so warped that it allowed wind and rain to whip through the cracks. Hardly were we in our rooms when at our windows we saw Indian faces, their noses plastered against the panes. One after the other departed, but one old brave remained. At last I, too, pressed my nose opposite his. He threw his blanket over his head, leaving one eye uncovered with which he continued his sinister inspection. This was their way, spying on newcomers and then with incredible swiftness informing the entire tribe. Wild tales of dangerous redmen came to mind.

After dinner we called on the Indian agent, a Quaker named Miles, who welcomed Haury as an old friend. Miles was delighted that we wished to start a mission on his reservation, but asked that we confine ourselves to the Arapaho, since the Quakers had at last consented to his long-cherished plan of working with the Cheyenne. He showed us the commissary, the government school, and the industrial equipment, all simple and practical. We then met the other workers and some Indians. Our first half day was indeed well spent. But during the night we heard the howling of the Indians in their nightly song-fest.

We visited the well-conducted day school. Miss Goebel, a German girl from Pennsylvania, impressed me as a particularly successful teacher. She spoke English very distinctly in order that the little Indians might understand. I wished that I might improve my English under her method. The children all helped in the kitchen and in the house. Older boys took care of the cattle and horses and of the farming under the supervision of a farmer. At mealtime the Indians ate together, simple food served by Indians under supervision.

We also visited the Sunday school conducted by the government school. About thirty Indians and twenty-five white—most of the workers—were present. The superintendent opened the meeting with song and prayer, and the children sang nicely and behaved well. Miles gave a short English talk and then asked Haury and me also to talk. At the close of the meeting, Cutfinger, the chief of the Arapaho, came up to greet his old friend Haury. Many other Indians followed him.

In the afternoon we visited some Indian camps, then spent a friendly hour with Miles and his wife. After telling us of many experiences with the Indians he presented his plans for our work and offered his counsel. Then we proceeded on foot along the North Canadian River to the sawmill which had been offered to Haury for his use. It saved the Conference a great deal of money in the building of the first mission house. On the way back I met a young Indian named Lefthand. At first he would not admit that he could speak English. Finally he opened up and in halting English told me that he was the baker at $20 a month. He showed me the bakery and then brought out his drawings of Indian subjects for me to see.

Evening services were conducted by Miles. All the whites from the agency, including Seger of the hotel, and a crowd of Indians were present. Haury preached on the text, John 3:16. Brown, the superintendent, afterward interpreted the sermon to the children, saying he could add "Yes" to all that was said. With the sound of the nightly Indian howls drifting across the prairie we returned to the hotel. I visited an Indian family in a nearby tent. The chief asked Tiemann, a German bricklayer, "John, tobac'." Tiemann cut off a piece for him, telling me, "We can't give them a whole block, because they never return any part of it."

On Monday, after going to the agency, we ate in the Arapaho school with about one hundred Indian children and three Negroes. We were served better food at the white workers' table. In the afternoon we attended a funeral at the Darlington school, which had been built two years before and was more modern. The funeral was held in the schoolhouse with the mother seated at one end of the coffin and the grandmother at the other. After a brief talk by Haury, the body was taken to the burial place

and was lowered into the grave. The grandmother now cut all the beads from her moccasins, gashed the calves of her legs, and then the hopeless wailing began. After the white guests had departed, the father joined the mourners, and then, I suppose, the cutting of hair also began. Often the Indians would cut off a finger for each member of the family who died. "It is good to be a Christian; one sees the heavens open and not alone the grave."

We took a drive through the reservation, passed Indian camps, were greeted by Buckman clothed only in an apron, stopped at Cutfinger's tent, and then at the farm of a wide-awake Caddo Indian, George Washington. His granddaughter, Maggie Leonard, was the first Mennonite convert, baptized by A. B. Shelly. Now past Gibson's store to Seger's home. On the way a small Indian boy begged, "Chuckaway," meaning, "Give me something to eat." But he was afraid at first to take the bread from my hand, lest I try to catch him.

Our task was now completed. The agent had consented to our beginning a mission to the Arapaho, Darlington was designated as the place, and a building site was chosen. On April 19 we arrived in Halstead, safe and sound, for God's protecting hand had guided us all the way.

Growth of the Work

On May 18, 1880, Haury and his young wife left Halstead for Darlington to begin their mission work.[8] At first they lived in a rented house. Material for the mission house had either to be brought overland by wagon—150 miles—or found on the place. Wood and stones were not far away, but had to be sawed and cut. The agent had offered the government sawmill, but he needed white men who knew how to handle sawmills and stone cutting. Haury's first task was to supervise and to instruct the Indians in this manual labor. That cannot be accomplished in nightgown and slippers. What difficult times the early workers had those who came only ten years later hardly understood!

[8]S. S. Haury and Susie L. Hirschler were married on November 6, 1879, at Summerfield during the session of the missions board. Christian Krehbiel performed the ceremony.

In the next years there were a number of workers. Cornelius Duerksen and wife from Alexanderwohl came to help with the building. Then Jacob Kirchhofer from Sonnenberg, Ohio, did carpentering. C. H. Wedel served as teacher for a short time, but the Indian boys took advantage of his nearsightedness, and he left to study theology. Henry H. Ewert was sent in 1881 to substitute for Haury until he could recover from serious eye trouble.

On February 21, 1882, Haury reported to the missions board that the mission house had burned down. Lost in the fire was his son Carl and the three children of Walter Hauser.

As soon as we received the news, Heinrich Richert and I hurried to Darlington. What a sad spectacle! The new building was completely destroyed. Four children had lost their lives. The families had lost all their possessions. Kind neighbors took them into their homes, and the Lord gave rich comfort in their severe loss.

The board was puzzled as to what to do. Four thousand dollars had gone up in smoke. Would the Mennonites be willing again to support the young mission work? After much prayer the Lord gave assurance that mission friends would again respond. The order was given to clean up the rubbish. Both the Indian agent and the officers at Fort Reno rejoiced at the decision. The latter at once offered the use of a large tent until the new building was completed. The churches responded liberally to the call for help, and soon enough money was gathered to permit the order to begin building. In addition, the government answered Haury's request for aid, with a grant of $5,000. This made it possible to build a house of brick, which is still standing today (January 7, 1907).[9] Much of the work had to be done by the missionaries themselves. But they derived many blessings.

Both the Arapaho and the Cheyenne received a Christian influence here. Although we were not permitted to preach to the Cheyenne, their children attended our school. When the Quaker mission did not materialize, our mission worker could also serve in the Cheyenne school. At the time that the Darlington school closed there were 35 students on the roll, and

[9]This second building at Darlington was torn down in 1960.

there was a flourishing farm of 200 acres where the boys learned to raise things. Since all the Indians received their rations at Darlington, the older ones learned to know the missionaries and received them more willingly in their camps. The government personnel, too, came under the refining influence of the missionary. Perhaps because of all these good results the government agent later, unsolicited, offered us Cantonment.

In 1882 H. R. Voth became a teacher in the mission.[10] He had been received as a student by the board in 1877, had studied at Wadsworth for two and one half years and for two years in the Evangelical Seminary, Marthasville, Missouri, and then for one year in the St. Louis Medical College.

Soon after Voth's arrival in Darlington he was sent to nearby Cantonment to carry on missionary work among the Indians. The board had in this year opened up a new mission station here, having been offered the use of the abandoned fort with its blockhouses, barracks, two stone houses, a hospital, and a bakery. In addition, there were 160 acres on which to build a mission house and to farm in order that the Indians might be instructed in farming as well as in Christianity. The following spring Haury, as a more experienced missionary, was transferred to Cantonment, and Voth was made superintendent of the Darlington mission.

Visiting the Field Again

From February 14 till March 4, 1883, the board members, C. J. van der Smissen, Christian Schowalter, H. Richert, S. F. Sprunger, and Christian Krehbiel visited the missions. The board had been commissioned to discuss plans with Haury for uniting the two fields.

We started from Halstead, but had to lay over a day in Caldwell because the rivers were at flood stage. The first creek still was so swollen on the following day that only one person was permitted to ride in the coach with the driver.[11] The rest of us crossed over on the railroad bridge. Although the road was in

[10]In 1884 Voth married Barbara Baer of Summerfield. She died in 1889. In 1892 he married Martha Moser of Dalton, Ohio.

[11]Christina Hirschler, sister of Mrs. Haury, remained in the coach.

terrible condition, we arrived at Pond Creek State Range about four. Here we remained for three days because the Salt Fork River was out of its banks and frozen over. A party of men from McPherson County, Kansas, who had joined Payne's Army (a group that wanted to conquer the Indian Territory by force) entertained us with their adventures. One of the men was a guard for 3,000 cattle, the owner being in Washington as a witness in the Sternpost Swindle.

As our layover included a Sunday, we held a service in the hotel parlor. C. J. van der Smissen, using as his text, "(He) rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm" (Matthew 8:26), emphasized that our unscheduled delay perhaps was a God-given opportunity to prepare ourselves for the task ahead. Since we had all come from active work, we did need time for composure.

Monday afternoon the drivers courageously decided to undertake the journey. At the usual crossing the river was still so hemmed in with ice that it was impossible to drive into it. A little farther down the ice was broken. But here the approach was a four-foot perpendicular descent. I had a front-seat view of the dilemma because I sat with the driver. With a terrific jolt we landed safely in the creek. Ahead of us great blocks of ice floated in the water, threatening horses and wagon. Our seasoned and capable driver skillfully avoided the large blocks and brought us safely across to the south bank of the Salt Fork. The passengers hardly knew how great was the danger from which the Lord had saved us.

Without further adventure we arrived at Darlington to be greeted joyfully by the missionaries, including Haury who had come over from Cantonment. Those of the committee who had not been there before inspected the mission. They were particularly pleased with the fine mission house and the excellent behavior of the thirty school children. During the tour the elderly van der Smissen fell on the hard stone sidewalk. I still marvel at his composure after such a hard fall. The board then met with the agent, Miles, to discuss some serious difficulties which had arisen at Darlington. These were settled satisfactorily and at Cantonment later the board could give instructions for the entire field.

At Darlington we rented spring wagons for the seventy-mile trip to Cantonment. Both the ride over the prairies and the primitive conditions at Bent's Ranch where we spent the night constituted a hardship for the elderly van der Smissen. Although the Canadian River was crossed and recrossed, the horses often having to swim, the journey was accomplished without incident.

The workers as well as the Indians welcomed us joyously at Cantonment. If I remember correctly, we stayed over Sunday and held services there. We also had talks with the Indians of the two tribes, S. S. Haury and Dan Tucker, the blacksmith, acting as interpreters. Both tribes willingly agreed to the suggestion that we build a school there, but the Cheyenne stipulated that children of the other tribe should not be admitted. The board felt there should be no discrimination on a mission field, and so ordered that the school be open to both tribes.

Since administrative work required so much of Haury's time, John J. Kliewer was sent in 1884 to take over the teaching duties. He served as teacher until 1886 when Haury resigned. This was a great blow to the Conference. Haury had been the first missionary, the actual founder of the mission, an energetic worker. To the Indians he was both father and interpreter. For the Conference he had been the trusted representative. It was with profound regret that they saw him leave. J. J. Kliewer was now made superintendent of Cantonment; and H. R. Voth, principal of all the missions.

The building planned by Haury was finished during Kliewer's administration by A. T. Kruse, Sr., of Halstead. The builder devoted the first year (1888) to gathering the materials needed. The bricks were baked on the spot, the logs were cut to specification into lumber at the government sawmill, stones were hewn for the foundation, and lime was burned. The second year found its own difficulties in misunderstanding between the builder and the mission workers, in the inability to get capable bricklayers and carpenters, and in the delays occasioned by the distance from the railroad. But the handsome building, three stories high with a basement, was completed in the second year. Seventy students and all of the missionary personnel were housed in it, and there were two large classrooms.

Washita Mission

Because so many Indians lived there, it was decided to open a mission station at Washita, some seventeen miles from Cantonment, sixty from Darlington, and near the Seger Colony. In February 1889 Voth and Kliewer on order of the board went to Washita to locate a site for a mission. In July, J. J. Kliewer was asked to establish the station. His brother, Henry Kliewer, began the first preparations, until J. J. Kliewer's duties as housefather at Cantonment could be taken over by someone else. It was a pioneer settlement, requiring the digging of wells, cutting down of trees, and the building of blockhouses with sod roofs. Since only $800 was allowed them, they had to do much of the work themselves. But their energy and their willingness to sacrifice for the Lord's work resulted in enough houses by spring to give them and their family cover.

In 1890, together with Daniel Hirschler, housefather at Cantonment, I made a trip to Washita. The seventeen miles should have been covered in a comparatively short time. But at a fork in the road we turned right instead of left. All day long we drove, seeing no houses, no people, no trees, no water. We let the ponies gallop. But where to? Of one thing Hirschler was now sure. We were not on the right road. About ten that evening we heard dogs barking. Soon we came to a woods along a small creek. Somewhere nearby Indians were howling. Thinking that there might be a wider river ahead to ford, we decided to spend the night in a deserted tepee. Leaving the ponies at the edge of the wood, we prepared our supper, and then decided to sleep. Hirschler, who had gone down to the creek, came back quickly, his eyes large with fright. "There's a panther down there. I saw his eyes." I was sure he had not, but thinking precaution the better part of valor, we took his gun and a large hatchet and out we went to meet the foe. But he was gone. Suddenly the beast howled and repeated his night-song until he was miles away.

When day broke, we found we were near an Indian camp. Crossing the nearby Washita River with our horses—luckily they had not wandered off—we came immediately to a large number of tents, an Indian village. The redmen were friendly. Hirschler, with his Arapaho and sign language, conveyed to the

chief that we were to preach the gospel to the Indians. The chief was pleased. Then we told him we were lost and wanted to find Kliewer's place. The chief knew the place which was some twenty or thirty miles south. An old Indian offered himself as guide for the fifty-cent piece I showed him. Mounting his pony, he grunted, "Come on," and shot ahead at a swift gallop. Then a long distance ahead of us, he jumped off his pony, lay down in the grass, and let his pony graze until we caught up. Thus we played hide and seek across the prairie. Finally he pointed out the direction and started home. Another dollar lured him further. This trick he played on us until I promised him a good dinner at Kliewer's, whereupon he rode with us to the blockhouse.

The 160-acre mission station lay in a pretty valley along the Washita River. The blockhouses on the pleasant rise were built of tree trunks, the cracks filled with lime. The residents greeted us as only those who have lived away from civilization will greet old friends. Living conditions were so hard. The well water was red and salty. The sod roofs were porous and after each rain the dirt floor was coated with the red silt. The Kliewers, who had done much of the work on the fine houses now enjoyed by others, were sitting in these sod houses, again doing manual labor. Mrs. J. J. Kliewer was in the last days of her pregnancy and Voth had come over to assist. Let him who can close his heart to the sacrifices these pioneers made, who as active missionaries cheerfully brought to the Indians both evangelization and civilization.

Later Developments

The missionaries had much to learn—both as to language and as to Indian traits. One day while Kliewer was at work Big Jack, a huge Indian chief, dropped in to see him. Kliewer continued working, which greatly angered the chief. He went away threatening to forbid the mission station on his land. Later we drove to his village. On the way Big Jack passed us. Kliewer called to him, but he stalked on. At his village he greeted us politely, saying, "Now we are even. You had no time for me; now I had no time for you. We can be friends."

Kliewer visited the camps and the Seger school and worked

among the Indians, old and young. As soon as he could he built a frame schoolhouse which was well attended by day pupils. A serious situation arose when the government divided the land among the Indians. The mission could keep only 40 of its 160 acres of cultivated land. Kliewer offered to buy the three forty-acre tracts, and later, if the Conference wished, he would sell them to it. In the meantime another denomination took over the Seger school, thus coming into this territory, and we withdrew our mission effort. Kliewer then bought the land for himself. Thus, unfortunately, this station was lost to the Conference.

In February 1886 Andreas S. Voth was called to Cantonment as a teacher with a yearly salary of $300 plus lodging and board. Up to this time the missionaries had been paid $200 a year, the workers $150 and the women $120. In 1892 Voth was appointed superintendent and housefather, which position he held until the new mission house burned, after which he moved to Darlington.

In February 1893 a fire destroyed the fine new mission house in Cantonment. Fortunately, no lives were lost, but the mission workers lost all their possessions as well as a fine library. On telegraphic notice of the fire, I left home at once, arriving three days later at the ruins. The neighbors in the old soldier barracks had taken in the homeless. But the case looked hopeless, for only a few walls remained standing. The basement walls, however, looked substantial enough to carry a frame building. The Indians were willing to clear the rubble and to work on the new building. With trust in the Lord, I encouraged the brethren to clean up the debris, confident that the Lord would create a willing spirit among mission friends.

No one knew the origin of the fire. Someone having smelled smoke found a bed afire near the chimney on the third floor. Had water been handy it might have been possible to put out the fire. Investigation showed that because a flue had fallen out, burning soot from the first fire of the season had dropped on the bed and ignited it. Thus I was able to prove to my satisfaction that the catastrophe had been the fault of neither the builder nor the inhabitants.

I remained for a few days to bolster the courage of the breth-

ren and to help in razing the dangerous walls. Meantime, I wrote to the board, laid before them plans for the rebuilding, and called a session of the board. This took place soon after my return home. Letters were then sent to the churches. The response was most gratifying. They all were in favor of rebuilding and sent such sums of money that the work could be begun. Since the board asked my son, J. S. Krehbiel, to be overseer, I asked them to appoint a building committee of which I would not be a member. In this new two-story house a mission rich with blessing was carried on for some years.[12]

Rodolphe Petter was at Cantonment at the time of the fire. A man who had already mastered seven languages now applied himself diligently to learning Cheyenne. Soon he could talk with the people, and not long after began translating parts of the New Testament into that language.[13] The work among the Cheyenne thus received new impetus; in fact, it became our special mission work. A church was erected. Petter and his wife and Bertha Kinsinger worked successfully with the older Cheyenne, visiting frequently in the camps.

Up to this time good schools had been maintained, with emphasis on industrial education for the Indians. Samuel Mosiman had believed that the Indians should learn better farming methods. But Petter felt that the mission should concern itself with bringing the gospel to the Indians. Once they were Christians the desire to work and the aptitude would follow naturally. With the departure of Mosiman this latter theory was followed. (See Appendix III.)

Soon after this the government indicated that it would no longer provide clothing, school material, and food for the Indians, once the government boarding schools were established.

[12]J. S. Krehbiel later established a mission at Red Hills where many of the Arapaho received their allotments. Here he took out a claim on which a church for Indians was built, his father, Christian Krehbiel, furnishing the money since it was uncertain that the church would long remain a mission church. It was eventually moved into Geary, Oklahoma, where J. S. Krehbiel remained its pastor.

[13]Petter had arrived on the field in 1891. He became very proficient in the Cheyenne language and through him other missionaries learned the language with more ease. He visited Montana several times and finally suggested that G. A. Linscheid be sent to open a mission to the Cheyenne there.

The Indian commissioner was positive that the government school would not interfere with the mission school. To the query, though, as to whether the government would like to buy our buildings, he made no answer. The board, after duly considering the advisability of continuing the school, decided to abandon the one in Cantonment.

The new era in the Oklahoma mission has advantages. The workers, not overburdened with school and farm duties, can devote more time to language study, to camp visits, and to Sunday school work with the children. As a result there are more baptisms. How much better this new system of government schooling is than ours in which the youth was given Christian instruction as well remains to be seen. So far it cannot be proved that the Christianized Indians have at once and voluntarily obeyed the biblical instruction, "By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." At any rate, no fine farms have sprung up among the Christian Indians.[14]

Conclusions regarding the future are subject to error. Nevertheless, I wish to state mine here. Through giving up the mission school in Darlington the Mennonite mission lost its hold, and others have harvested the crop. In Washita J. J. Kliewer was not permitted to open a school. The American Mission which took over the Seger colony benefited thereby. The same was true at Red Hills. In Darlington the work was taken over by others who pushed north to the North Canadian River next to our Mennonite mission and harvested what we had sown. Then pushing on, they demanded the Arapaho field where Funk was. In Cantonment we turned the youth over to the government. Here they learned English, but they also learned that the American looked down on the German neighbor. If an English revivalist comes now, what will be the result?

What will be the future of the Cheyenne Mennonite Mission? Shall we continue to leave the education of the youth in other hands? Shall we no longer teach them to work with their hands so they may have abundance and be able to help the needy? If

[14]See Appendix III for a list of missionaries who served on the Oklahoma Indian field during the early years.

we continue giving up one station to start a new one, then I fear we shall lose the entire field.[15]

Further Visits to the Indian Missions

Members of the missions board, A. B. Shelly, Christian Schowalter, Bowman of Pennsylvania,[16] H. Richert, and myself left Halstead on May 25, 1888, returning June 13. Our object was to decide whether to start the mission at Washita, and whether to build a new house in Cantonment. On this occasion we baptized the first convert (June 3). The question of washing of feet as part of the Communion service was settled when Brother H. Richert made the motion that it should not be observed on the mission station.

On our drive to the Seger Colony on the Washita River, H. R. Voth drove the two-mule wagon. Fording the river, we drove down a very steep bank. The rear of the wagon toppled over the mules into the water, with Shelly and Richert standing in water. The rest of us quickly jumped into the water, hip-deep, dragged the men out of the water, and then rescued the mules and the wagon. The broken shaft we replaced from the nearby woods.

At Seger's Colony we held a council in Little Black Jack's (Indian chief) camp. He finally reluctantly agreed to permit the Mennonites to establish a station in his province. We then chose a site for the mission after which we returned to Seger's, where we held devotions.

At Cantonment we watched the Indians enjoying the revelry of their fall slaughter. As soon as an animal dashed out of a corral, half a dozen Indians shot at him until he fell. When all had been shot the skinning, blood-letting, and eating of flesh began.

[15]The General Conference now (1961) operates four main mission stations in Oklahoma: Canton, Clinton, Hammon, and Seiling. These are churches around which the mission effort is oriented. Such church-related programs as vacation Bible schools and youth retreats are promoted, but no regular day schools are operated under the mission program.

[16]Records do not indicate a board member by the name of Bowman. However, there is some evidence pointing to a certain Gerson Bauman of Bowmansville, Pennsylvania, as possibly being the man who made this trip.

Misunderstandings which had arisen at Cantonment had to be cleared, and the Indians had to be interviewed as to their desire to have a school there. For attraction, each tribe was promised half a beef, sugar, coffee, and crackers. Many came. A young Cheyenne made an expert interpreter of the talks by Shelly and Schowalter and of the Indian replies. Many of the Cheyenne felt that the government was a better friend than the Mennonites because it gave them food. Others spoke for a Mennonite school, especially Bull Thunder, the Arapaho chief. I argued with them, and after Petter and Lieutenant Loomis added their approval, the council voted in favor of the new building. Voth wrote a petition to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The site having been chosen, we could then depart.

It is a good sixty miles from Cantonment to Darlington. Had we left early in the morning we could have made the trip in one long day. I proposed that we camp out that night, that our Pennsylvania brethren might experience some missionary hardships. We enjoyed two meals out in the open and drank our camp-fire coffee under brilliant moonlight. But as for sleeping—that was another matter. Wolf howls and Indian yells kept them awake most of the night. Still, both of them were pleased, for they could now tell tales of the "Wild West."

On this trip we traveled by railroad 180 miles from Halstead to Arkansas City and back, and drove some 500 miles by stage and spring wagon.

The object of this trip to the Indian Territory was to sell the large herds of cattle owned by the mission and to get Indian children for the school on our farm. The land was to be divided among the Indians, and our acreage reduced. Herman Suderman and Rudolph Claassen accompanied us as prospective buyers. From Hennessey, Kansas, we drove in a rented old spring wagon pulled by two small mules with poor harness. Passing through the Blackjacks where Negroes lived, we came to Todd's Crossing on the Cimarron. It was night. The stream was very high. A kindly German, Stambach, reconnoitered on muleback, and then said he could lead us safely across. Halfway across, a rotted trace gave way, and one of the mules sank. The driver, aghast, lost his head. Quickly we jumped out of the wagon into hip-deep water. We shoved the wagon until

we could repair the trace. Safe, but soaked to the skin, we ran most of the remaining ten miles because of the cold sharp wind until we arrived at the home of H. Schmutz. Here hot punch and dry clothes quickly revived our spirits.

The next day we took care of the cattle business. Then we visited with Todd and his Indian wife, whose two children were in our school. His brother-in-law acted as our interpreter to the Indians who came to visit. Through a wild but beautiful region we came the next day to Cantonment, where the Petters and Mouttets welcomed us cordially. My sons, Henry and Jacob, met me here. Suderman and Claassen left us and returned home. Jacob took care of the sale of the rest of the cattle.

After that, Schmutz, my two sons, and I left for the station at Washita. We again drove in the wrong direction. At last toward evening we arrived at Good Bear's camp. Because he knew "Smuts" as he called him, Good Bear showed us a good camping place, and had his wife care for our horses. After we had eaten of our rations we went into his family tent, where his son acted as interpreter. Old Good Bear soon told us they had nothing to eat. We gave him most of what we had, for we were soon to be where there was plenty.

After a good night's sleep, Good Bear took us to a hill and there in the sand he sketched a map of our way across the prairies. Heading us in the right direction, he left us. About six that evening we arrived at the Kliewer home. We made plans for the new building and then started home, visiting at the new Seger school and at Darlington. Several Indian lads came home with me.

I should like to note here that for all but one of these many trips into the Indian Territory I paid my own expenses.

Visit to the East

Another memorable trip was one taken from November 5 to December 10, 1875. First I attended the Western District Conference in Berne, Indiana, where, without warning I was asked to deliver the Conference sermon. At that time one was so in the center of Conference activity that it was easy to strike the right key.

The General Conference was to convene shortly afterward in Quakertown, Pennsylvania. Three important issues were to be presented. Schowalter and I spent a few days in Berne afterward, acquainting the people with these problems, preaching at frequent services. The first problem was that of the school at Wadsworth. The second dealt with the beginning of mission work. The third brought up the matter of Mennonite emigration from Germany and Russia.

On the train to Quakertown we were joined by my uncle, Daniel Krehbiel of Cleveland, and by D. F. Risser, teacher at Wadsworth. Many questions were argued with a clash of opinions. One was: "Shall the use of alcoholic liquors be considered a sin?" Some thought it could be classed under "Be temperate in all things."

During the Conference, sermons were given by C. J. van der Smissen and S. S. Haury, who had just returned from Germany. I spent one Sunday with A. B. Shelly in his beautiful church, and the next Sunday in Hereford with Christian Clemmer. Moses Gottschalk and Ephraim Hunsberger preached here. The missions board held several meetings. The difficulty at Wadsworth between the German professor and the theological professor had to be solved, and I had to act as judge. There were apologies, and then the German professor resigned.

In Philadelphia we heard Andrew Clemmer in the Second Mennonite Church and enjoyed the organ music by a masterly student. In New York we visited Adolf Krehbiel, my second cousin. We also went to Central Park. When I inspected an ocean liner of the Inman Lines I was filled with such longing for my old home in Germany that had it not been for my dear ones in the West I should have booked passage.

On the second of December we visited the Stauffer family, formerly of Buchhausen, in their Metuchen, New Jersey, home. On the fourth of December we were in Clarence Center, New York, with Jacob Krehbiel, Jacob Eberhard, and others. On Sunday we attended services in the church by the Falls. Joseph Schenck and David Habegger, 84 years of age, were there. Krehbiel preached tenderly to thirty people, on Hebrews 12:25, and I used 1 Peter 5:1 as my text.

We visited the great Niagara Falls. We crossed the suspen-

sion bridge to see the Falls from the Canadian side. D. F. Risser and I, despite the icy conditions, elected to walk under the Falls. We went down the long stairway and came out on a six-foot-wide path over the frothing stream. The path was overlaid with ice. Above us hung enormous icicles like pendulums from the towering rocks. We could so easily have slipped into the great waves. Suddenly one of the icicles dropped behind us with a resounding crash. "Stop!" I called to my companion above the roar of the falls. "This is enough adventure." He did not wish to give up, but when I turned, saying, "This is more than folly," he, too, came back. I have been there several times at other seasons and have always felt respect and awe for the greatness of God's wonders.

We visited again in Clarence Center with uncle Jacob Krehbiel and his sister Hannah. Also with the Baers, Theodore Krehbiels, and many others. But it was time to return to my beloved ones. Thank God I found them all well and happy.

8

To the Mesas of Arizona

In the fall of 1892 the board commissioned H. R. Voth, who had just returned from a trip to Palestine, and me as the president of the board to go to Arizona to study the possibility of opening a mission field among the Hopi Indians. Peter Stauffer, who had been the farmer at Cantonment, was now superintendent of the Moqui Indians in Keam's Canyon.[1] He had written to the board that he had found the Moquis (now called Hopis) ripe for mission work. These Indians lived in villages and earned their own living by farming and weaving.

Our trip by train brought us to Holbrook, Arizona. In 1892 this was a small town with several stores and one hotel near the depot. Most of the houses were built of adobe. It was a cowboy rendezvous, with shooting the order of the day. Shortly before we came some cowboys had been killed in such a brawl.

From Holbrook we intended driving some eighty miles farther west by stagecoach. Since this ran once a week, and the next one scheduled would arrive the following Friday, we chose to rent a wagon and see something of the country. Our driver Claassen, a Mormon, took us to Woodruff, a Mormon colony, where we stayed overnight. It was a shabby village, the irrigation ditches in ruins, and the little fields dry and yellow. A

[1]Collins, who had been in the government service in Indian Territory, was appointed superintendent of the Moqui Indians in Keam's Canyon. Having seen the work of Stauffer as farmer, teacher, and government worker at Darlington, he persuaded Stauffer to go with him. Later Stauffer became superintendent.

massive dam in the river built at a cost of $40,000, had been washed out for the third time in a short period. The people seemed to enjoy a companionable life. They were good hearted, though somewhat illiterate. When I asked them whether they were Christians or Mormons, the housemother answered, "We think we are the best Christians there are."

We drove back to Holbrook the next day, through stony hills, sparsely covered with cedars and sagebrush and strewn with petrified trees. Near here it is said there is a whole forest of petrified wood. The reason for this condition is not known.

Since the long ride had made us good friends, I asked Claassen confidentially whether polygamy did not make the women jealous. Quite seriously he answered, "Oh, no, I know families of four to six wives who live most peaceably together. My wife and I have no children and she has often suggested that I take another wife so that we can have children. Sarah made the same request and so did both of Jacob's wives. God himself said to David, 'You have many wives, and if you had asked me I would have given you many more.' "[2] From his obvious sincerity it was evident that the Mormons had influenced the consciences of their followers and had made them believe in their interpretation of the Scriptures.

Our destination was Keam's Canyon, a distance of seventy miles from Holbrook to which we had returned safely under Claassen's good guidance. The stagecoach made this strenuous journey in two days. Our coachman, Tenny, had four good mustangs, for good horses were a necessity on such a trip. Halfway there, we came to a post run by the son of the half-breed woman who had lodged us two nights before. Here we lodged for the night. I asked our host whether he was well acquainted with the Hopi. Emphasizing his answer with a vigorous string of oaths, he declared that he had been a missionary among them for two years. Our Mormon coachman also was addicted to swearing. He was surprised when I asked him why he swore so much. "Do I swear?" he asked. Every time after that I

[2]This is evidently a reference to 2 Samuel 12:8, "And I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if this were too little, I would add to you as much more."

would say, "What was that?" until finally he said, "Oh, yes, we all swear like that, but we don't mean anything by it." After a hearty breakfast we left the post and drove all day, arriving at Keam's Canyon at four the next morning. Stauffer was not there, but Collins gave us a friendly welcome.

Keam's Canyon had been the property of a wealthy Englishman who sold it to our government for a high price to use as its school site. Simple buildings stood on one side of the stream which flowed down this romantic gorge. On the other side were small plots of irrigated land. The school was in the center of the settlement.

On Sunday we attended the Sunday school conducted by Collins. Stauffer returned during the day. In the evening H. R. Voth gave an illustrated talk on Palestine which was well received. Among the workers was a Catholic teacher, an artist. Another was Mrs. Collins, formerly Miss Goebel, whom I had seen teach in Indian Territory. She was equally successful here in teaching the children the language and having them memorize Scripture passages. On Monday morning, Collins showed us the entire station. As a Christian he was very happy that the Mennonites, whose work he had respected in the Territory, were planning to open a mission here.

About eleven o'clock Stauffer was ready to take us on a visit to the pueblos. At the first village we met the allotment agent, John Mayhew, and his wife, who asked us to have dinner with them on our return. It is strange how quickly the bonds of friendship are sealed when Christians meet in far-away places! In the afternoon we climbed up the mesa, the flat-topped hill on which the village was built like the old knights' castles. Only one road leads up. Walking paths are very steep. On three sides the mesa has perpendicular walls. The Hopi chose these high, inaccessible plateaus as a refuge from their enemies, the Navajo. We inspected the three-story houses, gathered the children, and through Stauffer, spoke to the older people. This was the mesa chosen for our first mission work.

From this mesa we went on to Stauffer's home on the lonely, arid prairie, where we were to spend the night. Our first care was for the horses. We took them half a mile to a pool of stagnant water and then left them to graze on the dry prairie. We

returned to a plentiful meal at the house. After midnight we rested well, preparing for the hardships of the next day.

And hardships they were! We jolted across the barren ground and up and down stony hills. On one steep hill the rear of the wagon, although it was held by two heavy chain drags, tried to get ahead of the front. By clinging to the rear of the wagon and sliding on the soles of our shoes, we managed to brake it. At the foot of this hill we came to a lovely valley and soon were at our destination, Oraibi. Here at the government house Stauffer was the carpenter. He talked with the Indians, while Voth made notes on the language. But we spent the rest of the day recovering from that wild ride.

Oraibi lies on top of a hill, rising abruptly on the south side, but leveling off to a plateau. The next day we visited here. The little children soon gathered when we offered them candy. "Catch the young ones, and you will have the old ones, too," proved true here. Since they all loved Stauffer, we were invited to visit in their homes, where they happily showed us their antiques and curiosities. They even let us step into the kiva. This was like a dry cistern of considerable size, so narrowed at the top that only one man at a time could enter to pass down the ladder to the floor. Around the walls was a sort of earthen bench. Here were the looms on which the men wove their celebrated rugs. The men collected in the kiva to hear us talk and to tell us many interesting facts about their tribe.

It seemed to us very necessary for a mission field in this arid land to have access to water for irrigating at least a garden. Westward it was said there was a big spring. Since wagons could not get through the chasms we had to ride on Stauffer's horses with an Indian guide. First we rode through the Oraibi village, then across the lovely plateau to a very steep chasm. Our guide stayed on his horse, but the rest of us felt safer on foot, leading our horses. None of us broke his neck! We were delightfully surprised at the beautiful spring gushing out of the rocks into a rock-hewn basin and on into a pleasant little stream. Unfortunately, it lay too far away for convenient use.

We found the Hopi to be a self-sufficient people. In all of the homes there were towering piles of melons and many different vegetables, neatly stacked—enough for a year. How

laboriously they worked to secure a harvest we saw as we traveled through their fields. The fields are several miles from the village. Because the land dries out so quickly, the fields are never plowed, only hoed. The rows of corn are set out eight feet apart and carefully guarded lest the birds scratch out the seed, or cattle eat the fresh young stalks. The wind is the worst enemy. It stirs up the light sand covering the new little plants, which must then be carefully bared by hand. If, after all this trouble, a crop does ripen, the harvest is carried up the mountainside on the backs of small Spanish mules. These burros also drag most of the water and wood up the steep paths, for the women cannot carry all of it. The loads these little animals carry sometimes make them invisible.

From Oraibi to Keam's Canyon Stauffer took us on a semicircle drive which enabled us to visit most of the villages. Overnight we stayed in a house Stauffer had built for an Indian. The latter was not at home, but we went in and kindled a fire. Soon after the owner's brother saw the smoke rising, he came over to investigate. He knew Stauffer and made us comfortable for the night. I shall not describe the other villages, since all were much alike. Some had water close at hand, others used wells dug in the prairie or in the sagebrush. These wells were wide at the top, some 30 feet, then narrowed terrace-fashion to the bottom where around the water basin there was a four-foot path. If the wells were properly protected, the people had good water. But I tasted some water which had been contaminated by sheep. What experiences the missionaries had to undergo!

On our way back we went by way of Keam's new ranch. He had chosen a lovely site for his pleasant buildings. As a bachelor he indulged in his English sports of horses, hunting, dogs, and pictures. He was sort of a king to the Indians, many of whom lived on his ranch; because of the high prices on his wares, they paid him a lordly tribute. He entertained us in a princely fashion. But as a skeptic he had no use for our mission work. In fact, he feared that he would lose his trading post if the Indians became Christians. This attitude manifested itself later when Voth had occasion to defend the Hopi. Keam did his best to have him deported. But God's ways are higher than man's ways. Keam has passed on; the mission still thrives.

From Keam's store we drove back through a narrow, lovely valley to the government agency, actually the secondary agency, the chief one being on the Navajo Reservation. We had met the chief agent and had asked him for a recommendation to begin a mission among the Hopi. One more afternoon was spent in Keam's Canyon, ending with a helpful visit with Mrs. Collins, who was ill. It was time to depart. On Friday a week after we arrived, the stagecoach picked us up, and we returned to Holbrook. Stauffer followed us with his four-horse team, carrying a load of curiosities to be exchanged for provisions. On the way back we spent the night at the Duall Ranch with Mormons. Voth retired early because of a headache. I sat chatting with the Mormons for a long time and then lay down under the free heavens with them to breathe the clear, dry autumn air. After all, I reflected, these Mormons are not so bad, depending on what chord one strikes.

At three in the afternoon we boarded a train of nearly empty tourist cars. One of these was our room until we reached Halstead. We spent the time reading and discussing our immediate problem. The report we could make was favorable, and in 1895 Voth began his work in Arizona. It was an expensive undertaking because things had to be sent from the far East or California. The site itself was inconvenient, hilly, and almost inaccessible. Voth proved himself an able antiquarian as well as missionary. He gathered many rarities which are now on exhibit in the Field Museum, Chicago. Since the *Bundesbote* often carries full reports of the development of these stations under J. B. Epp and Frey, I shall not tell any more about them.

But before closing these chapters on missions, I must pay a tribute to the sacrificial spirit of Uncle Jacob and Aunt Maria Leisy. They gave ample amounts to the mission work and made a legacy of $1,000 a year for ten years to the missions treasury. Their interest stimulated that of many others. Those who had gained so many blessings from the Lord in their removal to this country contributed generously to help others. May the Lord stir a continuing interest in the hearts of many!

9

Orphans and Indians Come to Halstead

The Indian school in Halstead in a certain sense had its inception when the writer was in Darlington in 1882. A young Indian named Wahahany (or Smith) had been sentenced to hard labor under military guard in Fort Reno because he had committed a robbery. Miles, the Indian agent, and S. S. Haury thought it might be well for the young man to be paroled to me on the farm. I agreed, but found the young man, although at times friendly, a great trial to my patience. I had been instructed to whip him if he was unruly, but that I did not want to do. One day while he was plowing, he threw his coat on the ground. The mules shied and refused to budge. Angered, he grabbed a hammer, sat on the mule, and began pounding him on the head. I took him off the mule and went on with the plowing, leaving him standing there as though he were not even worth a glance. Several days later I said to him, "You could have killed that mule." He agreed with me and was ashamed of himself. I had found the means of punishing him.

Indian School at Halstead

In the summer of 1884 Haury brought eighteen young Indians to Halstead to help the Mennonite farmers with their work. The purpose was to bring these young Indians under Christian influence and to teach them how to work. The boys did fairly well. They often gathered at our place with the Indians we had taken. Later Captain Platt of the Carlisle Indian School, Pennsylvania, adopted this plan, perhaps copied it from

us. Encouraged by this success, Haury now suggested that we send a number of the Indian boys and girls to the Halstead Seminary. The missions board agreed to this plan. Since it seemed advisable to have the boys room together and a house was available, Haury made a contract with the government, which agreed to pay traveling expenses and $160 per year for each student. Eighteen Indian boys were now housed next door to the school with A. S. Shelly as housefather and my brother Peter Krehbiel as teacher.

The second year G. A. Haury was the housefather and teacher. A larger tract of land was rented where the boys could raise vegetables. For this a team of horses and more tools were needed. Trouble arose because a different set of regulations applied to the Indian boys. Finally it was decided to give up this school because of the expense. It seemed feasible to transfer it to a farm and so we made the offer to take them to our farm at the same cost of $100 each. This offer was accepted, and in 1886 fifteen boys and three girls came to the school on our farm. Hardly had they been established when the new contract from Washington arrived, whereby government assistance was reduced to $127 per child. That made a slack of $600, which was taken up in part by the board.

We now had to hire a teacher; we had to retain the same number of farmhands, although the boys were to help; and in addition we had to get an industrial teacher and extra help in the kitchen, for these children needed constant supervision. How much self-denial all this cost us! I had always been accustomed to having an order executed promptly. Now I had to wait while an Indian made up his mind to respond. Sometimes one of the boys would sit with me an entire evening without revealing his wants. Then when it was time to go to bed he would be ready to chat for hours. He who wants to learn patience should take over an Indian school. Cleanliness, too, was a problem, for those who came directly from the camps often were infested with lice or scrofula. The number of children in the school rose from eighteen to forty-five or even fifty. In all, one hundred Indians came to our farm.[1]

[1]The Indian school at Krehbieltown was visited by the inspector of Indian schools. His report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was filled with praise and commendation.

The Indians had daily devotions and on Sunday they attended church. Fourteen were baptized in Halstead. Voth baptized eleven; and I, three. They remained members of the Halstead church until they returned home. Some are now members of the Geary church. Alas, many returned to their Indian ways.

Benjamin Roadtraveler was a talented and industrious student. He read an essay at a convention of Indian agents which was highly praised. A deep Christian spirit pervaded the essay. Later, he had difficulty in holding on to this belief. But when he was wasting away with tuberculosis, he told me that he had refused to let his tribe perform their heathen rites over him and had told them he held to Jesus as his Saviour.[2]

The transformation of the Indian school into an orphanage came about quite naturally. Uncle Leisy had given $5,000 to the Halstead church for an Orphan Fund with the condition that only the interest could be used for needy orphan children. Up to the time that the Indian school was nearing its close, nothing had been done for orphan children. At this time a man in Halstead lost his wife, leaving three little daughters. Our daughter, Martha, having nursed the woman, brought the two older girls to our home. This was the opening wedge.

The Leisy Orphanage

Simultaneously the question of discontinuing the contract schools had arisen. Pressure to this end had been brought to bear in Washington, and the Protestant churches had not renewed their contracts in the hope that apparently the Catholics, also, would discontinue their schools. We, too, decided to follow the current trend, and so our school was closed. All the Indians who wished to were invited to stay on. Four more orphans had already been added to the original two.

It was a shame to let the buildings which had been erected for the school at the cost of several thousands stand idle. On the other hand, we could not assume the financial burden involved in the care of the orphans. A Mennonite Society for

[2]Benjamin's brother Samuel, Daniel Redpipe, and Max Miller died of tuberculosis and were buried in the Krehbiel family lot in Halstead.

Orphans and Needy Children was now incorporated, which undertook to provide the financial support needed over and above the income from the Leisy Orphan Fund. With the plan well matured, the society was offered to the Conference, which, however, did not care to assume the obligation. Nevertheless, the society received substantial assistance from Conference members. Twenty children were brought up in the home. Most of them are members of the Halstead church.

About seventy-five orphans who stayed in the home for longer or shorter periods were established in Christian homes. Most of the families are satisfied with their adopted children. The Lord will truly bring a blessing into these homes, for "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matt. 25:40).

Trail's End

After these twenty years of work we have aged. Ten of our living children are established in their own well-ordered households. Only the two youngest are still unmarried and help carry the burdens of the day. That is a blessing for which we are thankful.[3]

He who does the work receives the greater blessing, I have learned. The orphanage, the Indian school, the Conference activities, the Mennonite migrations, the mission work, my office as a preacher—all of this entailed much work, much writing, and much travel. But in that way I have met many people; I have had many experiences; and I have learned that others, too, are enlightened by the Lord. Though this has greatly broadened my horizons, it has taught me to be humble, knowing that it was the Lord who took the farmer's son and made him an instrument in His hand. I know, too, that God can set this instrument aside without harming His great task.

I have previously acknowledged that writing is not my forte.

[3]The children of Christian and Susanna Krehbiel: David (deceased in 1873 at fourteen years of age), John W., Henry P., Jacob S., Katherine (Mrs. H. O. Kruse), Daniel R., Christian E., Susie (Mrs. Fred Ringelman), Bernhard P., Marie (deceased in 1875, the year of her birth), Martha (Mrs. R. A. Goerz), Edward B., David (twin of Edward who died in 1879 at less than one year of age), Paul G., and Lucas P.

How can I count it as a gift in my seventy-fifth year? It is only in response to the pleas of my sons that I have here written of my life experiences, trusting wholly to memory. *Forgive, dear Lord, the errors Thy servant has made. Bless the work of our church that it may continue to prosper.* Praise and give thanks. To this point the Lord has helped. His Name be praised!

Appendices

APPENDIX I

The Life of Christian Krehbiel

By H. P. Krehbiel and Edward B. Krehbiel

Christian Krehbiel was born on October 18, 1832, at Weierhof, a small village romantically located at the foot of the Donnersberg in the Palatinate, Germany. His parents, well-to-do farmers, were John and Katherine Krehbiel. The ancestry, like that of most Mennonites in southern Germany, traces back to Switzerland. Under pressure of persecution, one Jost Krehbiel (Kraehenbuehel) left Switzerland about 1671 and settled in southern Germany. To him in the sixth generation Christian Krehbiel traces his descent.

Beginning with his sixth year, he attended the good schools of that section until his eleventh year, when his parents removed to Einhoffen in Upper Bavaria, 25 miles from Munich. The school which he there attended for three years was very inferior. At fourteen attendance at school ceased, except at a certain Sunday school, where attendance was required by law, until the seventeenth year. He was not a brilliant student at school. It was always hard for him to memorize, but that sort of exercise was then chiefly employed. While literary training did not take so well with him, he, nevertheless, developed in mind by other educational influences. Chief among these were the educating conversations which were carried on by the many visitors at the parental home, and to which he always was a most attentive listener. Religion, morals, travel, and practical affairs all formed topics of conversation and discussion, and, no doubt, the scope of thought and the knowledge of affairs which later characterized the man trace their beginning to these early days of the then eagerly listening boy.



The Mennonite church occupied a commanding position in the little village on the Weierhof, in the Rheinpfalz, South Germany. Christian Krehbiel's father had his place of business opposite these steps, and Christian's first home was next door.

After having lived in Bavaria for seven years, a brother older than he was drafted for military service. Being faithful adherents to the doctrine of nonresistance, the parents were anxious to shield their sons from military service. Accordingly, they sold their farm at a great sacrifice, paid a thousand gulden for the release of their son from service, and in the spring of 1851 left the old homestead for America. A number of families emigrated together. The company made a temporary stop of nine months near Haysville, Ashland County, Ohio. During the summer of that year Christian Krehbiel worked on a farm. The place for ultimate settlement selected for the company was southeastern Iowa. To prepare somewhat for the coming of the families, Krehbiel, now nineteen years old, and another young man proceeded to Iowa in the fall of 1851. They went to Cincinnati, then a small village, there took passage on a steamboat and went down the Ohio River to Cairo, Illinois, then up the Mississippi to Keokuk, Iowa. It was during this trip, when youth was changed to manhood, that Krehbiel's independent activity began.

This present-day view from the foot of Donnersberg hills draws attention to the *Realanstalt*, or secondary school, and reveals the pleasant landscape of the Weierhof.







Top: During his boyhood, Christian Krehbiel attended this school in Bolanden, South Germany.

Bottom: The Mennonite church at Eichstock, Bavaria, where Christian Krehbiel's father was a deacon, was built in 1843.



Above: The Zion Mennonite Church (first building), Donnellson, Lee County, Iowa, was Christian Krehbiel's first home church in America.

Below: The Summerfield Mennonite Church, Summerfield, Illinois, as it appeared in 1864 when the congregation called Christian Krehbiel into the ministry.





The Wadsworth school, Wadsworth, Ohio, was the first school built by the General Conference Mennonite Church. It was created in 1866, but because of a lack of teachers did not open its doors until January 1868. The school continued for eleven years.

The place of settlement in Iowa was Lee County. A few families of Mennonites had settled there earlier. Upon his arrival, Krehbiel hired out to one of these for a year at $100. The following spring his parents and the rest of the company followed. During several succeeding years, Krehbiel was engaged in regular frontier work, cutting down the primeval forest and opening the soil to tillage. It was hard work, and life was plain in the simple log house they themselves had built. The great sacrifices made to get away from Europe to deliver the sons from military service had reduced the family's resources to slender means. But his active mind, associated with others equally active, did not suffer, and religious interest was kept up by a rapidly growing and live church.

After six years he with his brothers had succeeded in clearing the homestead for the parents. All Krehbiel had earned up to this time had gone to his parents. Only now that the parents were provided for did he begin to look out for himself. On March 14, 1858, he was married to Susanna A. Ruth, daughter of the minister, David Ruth. For two years he lived with his father-in-law. During the first year he was very sorely tried.

The First Mennonite Church, Halstead, Kansas, was primarily composed of members from the Summerfield, Illinois, congregation who moved to Kansas in 1874.





He was afflicted with an eye trouble which necessitated his remaining in a dark room for several months, and for some time his sight was so poor that it was feared he would become permanently blind. The Lord, however, granted recovery, his eyes suffering but slight permanent impairment. It was about this time that a settlement was begun by Mennonites from South Germany at Summerfield, Illinois. Believing that section to have climatic and other advantages over Iowa, Krehbiel removed to that place in March 1860. Here, as in Iowa, he followed farming as an occupation. During his nineteen-year residence in that section, he lived on four different farms. Beginning with almost nothing, by 1867 he, through industry,

Above: This Arapaho Indian encampment at Darlington, Indian Territory (Oklahoma), was a familiar scene during the early years when the General Conference began mission work here.

Below: Members of the Christian Krehbiel family camp out in 1896.





This is the Darlington mission school as it looked in 1865. The school was erected in 1882 and continued until 1898. The mission station was abandoned in 1902, but the building stood until very recently.

thrift, and God's blessing, had gained enough to own a nice farm directly adjacent to the little village of Summerfield, on which he resided for twelve years.

Krehbiel's life was, however, not designed to run the quiet course of purely agricultural pursuit. In September 1864 he was drafted to serve in the United States Army. From this service he was personally relieved by hiring a substitute. Two months later he was elected to the ministry to take the place of the pastor of the church, Daniel Hege, who had died. This gave a new direction to his life and opened the door to a most active and varied career. Already at the sessions of the General Conference held at Summerfield in 1863, he was a participant as a lay member. It was at his suggestion that Ohio was selected as the place to locate the contemplated school of the Conference. By his election to the ministry he naturally came into more immediate relation to the General Conference. At the dedication services of the Conference school at Wadsworth in 1866 he preached the first sermon with stirring effect.

The Western District Conference (later Middle District) which met for the first time in the Zion Mennonite Church, Iowa, in October 1868 was originated by Christian Krehbiel. For a number of years he served as home missionary of that body and was always a leader in the work. As early as 1870 he was in correspondence with European Mennonites who contemplated immigration to America. In 1872 four young men from Europe came to see him at Summerfield. Later, other

delegations came to consult with him, until he was in touch with all the leaders of the various immigrating churches, and Summerfield for several years became the first objective for Mennonite immigrants to this country. Many families took up temporary residence there until they could make the final selection for settlement. It was through him that the Mennonite Board of Guardians was originated, and as president he formulated its plans and directed its activity. Through this committee great savings were gained for the immigrants, much annoyance and hardship were averted, and many poor Mennonites who would otherwise have been unable to come over were enabled to come to this country.

In 1871 missionary interest was greatly stimulated. S. S. Haury, student at the Conference school and member of Krehbiel's church, had announced his intention to become a mission-

The mission workers at Darlington in the 1890s are pictured seated from left to right: Martha Moser, Mrs. Abraham Sudermann, J. H. Schmidt, Frieda Voth (later Mrs. J. G. Regier), Anna Voth (later Mrs. J. H. Schmidt), and Miss Penner (later Mrs. Rempel). Standing left to right: J. H. Richert, H. R. Voth, and Abraham Sudermann.



ary. Nevertheless, the expectation to carry on mission work through the Conference was almost defeated by Haury offering himself to the Amsterdam Mennonite Mission Society. It was through Krehbiel that this was changed, that Haury offered himself as missionary to the Conference and that the Conference took up an independent mission enterprise, to the good of the Conference itself and the blessing of the Indians. In 1872 the Conference began its foreign mission endeavor. Krehbiel was elected a member of the Foreign Missions Board, and the board in organizing elected him to the presidency, in which capacity he served for twenty-four years, planning and guiding the actual mission work as carried on in the field. Living close to the mission field, he often visited it and made it a point to be familiar with all its details.

In March 1875 he presided at the organization of the church at Halstead, Kansas, this church being an offspring of the church at Summerfield. In March 1879 he removed with his family to this place and settled on a farm adjacent to the town. In the fall preceding, the church at Halstead, knowing of his intention to remove to this place, had elected him its pastor. He had assisted in the organization of the Kansas Conference in 1877, and residing now in this district, he spent much of his time visiting the churches and developing the spirit of co-operation. He was among those who promoted the plan of a school for Kansas, and when the Kansas Conference decided to permanently carry on a school, it was through his influence that the Halstead church made its very liberal offer to furnish the buildings for the school. In connection with this school, the missions board tried for two years to carry on an Indian industrial school. When it proved only partially successful, Krehbiel undertook to carry on this school himself, and accordingly established it on his farm in 1887 and conducted it until 1896. About one hundred and fifty different Indian children came under his personal influence and care during this time.

Foreseeing that the United States Government was about to make such changes as would make the industrial school with the Indians impossible, he had in 1884 interested some others and organized the Mennonite Orphan Aid Society. The institution of which he was president was located at his home.





Top: The original Cheyenne mission station of the General Conference at Cantonment, Indian Territory (Oklahoma), was built of brick in 1890, but was destroyed by fire in February 1893.

Bottom: This second mission building at Cantonment was completed by November 1893, just nine months after the fire had destroyed the first building. In 1907 this mission boarding school was torn down.



Missionary H. R. Voth and a group of Hopi Indians laid the first stone for the Oraibi Chapel at Oraibi, Arizona, in 1901.

After his sixty-fifth year Krehbiel's life moved into calmer waters. He traveled much less, though he continued to attend sessions of the General Conference. He frequently filled pulpits in churches in the neighborhood of Halstead, continued as head of the orphan institution located at his home, and was active as minister of the Halstead church until his death. In these later years he backed Dr. Arthur E. Hertzler, the "horse and buggy doctor," in getting a hospital started in Halstead, experimented with orchard irrigation and improving farm methods, and devoted part of his time to writing his memoirs.

On January 30, 1909, he suffered a stroke, from which he speedily recovered. Some months later, on arriving home from a drive, a large barn door was hurled on him by a violent wind, and he died of his injuries two days later, on April 30, 1909. His wife Susanna, born April 22, 1840, died on April 19, 1920.

The Indian Industrial School, operated by Christian Krehbiel between 1885 and 1896, was located on his farm near Halstead, Kansas.





This Christian Krehbiel family portrait was taken on their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1907. Seated from left to right: John W., Susanna Ruth Krehbiel, Christian Krehbiel, and Lucas P. Standing from left to right: Henry P., Jacob S., Katherine (Mrs. H. O. Kruse), Daniel R., Christian E., Susie (Mrs. Fred Ringelman), Bernhard P., Martha (Mrs. R. A. Goerz), Edward B., and Paul G.

APPENDIX II

Family Chronology

My father was Johannes Krehbiel III since there were so many Johannes Krehbiels. Sometimes he was called Schowalter-Johannes, for his widowed mother had married a Jacob Schowalter. His own father was the son of a Jacob Krehbiel whose ancestors had been refugees from Switzerland, settling at the Pfrimmerhof.[1]

My grandmother was the daughter of Kaegi from Bolanderhof.

My mother was Katherine Krehbiel, daughter of Christian Krehbiel, a neighbor known as Big Christel because he was so tall. She was nicknamed Christele. He was a miller and came from the Donnersberghof to which other Swiss Mennonites had fled. Katherine's grandmother on her mother's side was of the Weierhof millers, descendants of the original Krehbiel settlers. This grandmother was smaller than my father's mother, but both were mild, loving, and good.

Both of my grandfathers succumbed to what was known as the French nerve disease, following the Napoleonic Wars. My father's stepfather was a strong, well-built man, devoted to the hunt on which I often accompanied him. His sons and grandsons live in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Iowa.

My father had three brothers—Jacob, Christian, and Daniel. Uncle Jacob married a Wohlgemuth daughter from the Albes-

[1]Christian Krehbiel's grandfather was a Jacob Krehbiel whose wife was Elizabeth Kapp. Christian's great-grandfather was another Jacob Krehbiel.

heimer mill. He later moved to Erlach, near Altmünster in the duchy of Dachau.[2] Uncle Christian never married. Uncle Daniel learned saddlery, traveled through Bavaria and Austria, and then in 1832 came to America with the Pfrimmerhof Krehbiels and settled in Williamsville, near Buffalo, New York. He married a daughter of the Friedelsheim Leisys, who lived on a farm near Cleveland, Ohio. He later moved to Cleveland.

Of my father's two stepbrothers, Adam married a Lattschar daughter from Friedelsheim and moved there; Peter married a daughter of Jacob Eymann from Biedesheim, and moved to Hayesville, Ohio, and later to Franklin, Iowa.

The oldest of my father's sisters, Katherina, married Jacob Krehbiel of the Weierhof mill and moved to Iowa. Three of their sons, Christian, David, and Theodor live near Moundridge. The other sister, Elizabeth, married her sister's brother-in-law Daniel, and they remained in the Palatinate.

My father had two stepsisters—Elizabeth, who died unmarried, and Barbara, who married Peter Strohm of Altmünster, Bavaria. They, too, moved to Iowa, where he died, leaving her with eight daughters to rear. She later married John Krämer, and they moved to Halstead.

My mother Katherine had four brothers: John, whose family is still at Weierhof and vicinity. Jacob's family is also still there. Christian's descendants which are still living are also in that community, except his son Christian, whose family, in part, is at Franklin, Iowa, where he moved as a young man. Some of his children are at Moundridge, Kansas, and one son is in Utah. Uncle Valentin died unmarried.

Of my mother's three sisters, Elizabeth married Johann Löwenberg; Maria, Jacob Eymann, widower; and Susanna, Michael Lehmann of the Heppenheim Mill. They all came to America, and from them stem the Eymanns in California, the Löwenbergs in Iowa, and in part the Lehmanns of Kansas.

[2]This Jacob Krehbiel, an uncle of Christian, became the pastor of the Zion Mennonite Church, Donnellson, Iowa.

APPENDIX III

Oklahoma Missionaries

Among those who worked on the mission field in the early years were:

1890—Paul Mouttet, housefather and supervisor in Darlington, one year.

1890—M. M. Horsch, teacher in Darlington, housefather, Cantonment. He founded the station Haoanaum (Clinton). Became proficient in the Cheyenne language. Resigned in 1903 and became elder of the Mennonite church in Upland, California.

1882—I. A. Sommer was a teacher in Cantonment for a year. Today he is the editor of the *Bundesbote*.

1892—H. L. Weiss came as a farmer to Cantonment. He was the bookkeeper for the second construction program. He now is a missionary in Dumbe, Chili.

1892—Fritz Riesen was the second leader in Cantonment.

Brother G. A. Linscheid was a teacher in Cantonment for several years, 1895-1898. Later he succeeded M. M. Horsch at Clinton. He is the founder of the mission in Montana.

Gerhard Ledig was the first farmer-helper that Missionary Haury had.

1888—Daniel Hirschler was housefather and doctor in Cantonment. He became government overseer in Darlington.

Others who were in Darlington for a longer or shorter time were Henry C. Dick, Joel Sprunger, A. E. Funk, O. S. Schultz, Jacob Meschberger, Jacob Richert, J. J. Voth.

1893—Samuel Mosiman was housefather at Cantonment. He believed that industrial education had much value for the Indians.

J. A. Funk opened a mission to the Arapaho.

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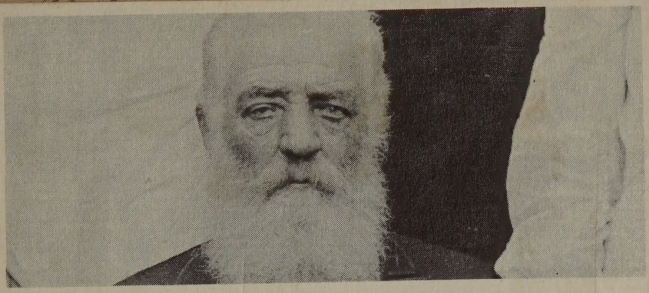
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Prairie Pioneer

Although not intended as a historical account, the autobiography of Christian Krehbiel conveys, as perhaps few other pioneer records do, the pulse and spirit of a historical drama—the coming of the Palatinate immigrants to the Middle West, beginning in the 1830s, and the great Mennonite migration from Russia in the 1870s. Significantly, Christian Krehbiel was not a bystander but a leading participant in this drama. It was during his lifetime that the foundations were laid not only for the General Conference Mennonite Church, but also for the economic, spiritual, and educational structure that was to develop among the Mennonites of the Middle West and prairie states. In this, too, Christian Krehbiel had an important part.

The author takes his readers with him as he relives the action-packed experiences of his life, a few of which are reprinted below. Some are poignant, many are humorous, and all reflect the kind of man Christian Krehbiel was.

LETTER TO RUSSIA *I wrote Jansen at length, depicting American conditions as fully and as truthfully as I could with my limited experience at writing. . . . "My description of conditions here is accurate in accordance with our knowledge of things and the way we view them; but in order to prevent any misunderstanding, I feel I must add that in this country every ordinary farmer and every businessman in ordinary circumstances must be his own best workman." I knew that many Prussian and Russian landowners did little with their own hands. Management was their function—cheap labor did the actual work. I wanted it understood that that system could not be employed in America.*

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